

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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The posthumous works

Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music

Introduction to Sociology

Problems of Moral Philosophy

Metaphysics: Concept and Problems

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason

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When Adorno approved the publication of a series of extempore lectures in 1962, he qualified his approval by commenting that

in his kind of work the spoken and written words probably diverged more widely than was commonplace today. Were he to speak as he was obliged by the dictates of objective discourse to write, he would remain incomprehensible. But nothing spoken by him could meet the demands he placed on a text. [. . .] In the widespread tendency to record and disseminate extempore speeches, he saw a symptom of the behaviour of the administered world, which was now pinning down the ephemeral word, the truth of which lay in its very transience, and holding the speaker to it under oath. The tape recording is like the fingerprint of the living mind.

These words apply even more to the present publication of the last academic lectures given by Adorno, in 1968, the year before his death. They are also the only lectures by him of which a tape recording has survived. This edition therefore goes a step further than Adorno himself did when he occasionally published improvised lectures in slightly revised form. By transcribing the tape recording literally – as far as possible – this edition attempts to convey what otherwise would have been irretrievably lost: a living impression of Adorno's lectures, however inadequately it may be reflected in print. Readers should not forget for a moment that they are reading not a text by Adorno, but a transcript of a talk 'the truth of which lay in its very transience'.

The approach adopted in the English translation is explained in the 'Translator's Afterword'.

LECTURE ONE

23 April 1968¹

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Perhaps I may be excused for being, quite simply, delighted to see you present in such numbers at this introductory lecture. It would be disingenuous of me to conceal it – either from you or from myself. And I appreciate the confidence you show in me by being here, especially in view of certain voices which have been raised in the press of late,² which, I am sure, have come to your notice as much as to mine. On the other hand I feel obliged, just because . . . [*Shout from the audience: 'Speak up!'*] Well now – isn't the loudspeaker working? – On the other hand I feel obliged, just because there are so many of you, to say a few words about the career prospects for students of sociology.

At the conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie³ a number of speakers complained that the Gesellschaft⁴ had failed to give you useful information on employment prospects for sociologists. I would point out that my colleague in Hamburg, Heinz Kluth,⁵ the Chairman of the Committee for Higher Education, has in fact taken great pains in that matter. However, I think I should also put before you some of the material we have in Frankfurt, however inadequate it may be, because it will help those of you who really are beginners to make a free choice on whether you want to study sociology, especially as your major subject. I have to tell you that the career prospects for sociologists are not good.⁶ It would be highly misleading to gloss over this fact. And far from improving, as might have been expected,

these prospects have actually got worse. One reason is a slow but steady increase in the number of graduates; the other is that, in the current economic situation,⁷ the profession's ability to absorb sociology graduates has declined. I should mention here something I was not aware of earlier, and have only found out since becoming closely involved in these matters. It is that even in America, which is sometimes called the sociological paradise, and where sociology does, at least, enjoy equal rights within the republic of learning, it is by no means the case that its graduates can effortlessly find jobs anywhere. So that if Germany were to develop in the same direction as America in this respect, as I prognosticated ten years ago, it would not make a significant difference. The number of students majoring in sociology has risen to an extraordinary degree since 1955.⁸ Let me give you a few figures: in 1955 there were 30 sociology majors, in 1959, 163; in 1962 there were 331, in 1963, 383; now there are 626. In view of this I should be professionally blinkered indeed if I were to tell you how wonderful it is that so many of you are studying sociology!

If you compare the expectations and wishes of students with the professions they actually later adopt, the results are even worse. For example – and this is very interesting – only 4 per cent of sociology students originally wanted to work at a university, whereas 28 per cent of graduates have been absorbed into higher education. In other words, the university, which produces sociologists, is also their main consumer, their primary customer. This is a situation which, making somewhat free use of the language of psychoanalytic theory, I have called incestuous [*Laughter*]. In my opinion, this is not a desirable state of affairs. On the other hand, only 4 per cent of students (I'll only give you a few figures, so that we don't spend too long on these matters) originally intended to go into market and opinion research, whereas 16 per cent have actually entered that profession. By contrast, a relatively high number – 17 per cent – wanted to work in journalism, radio and television, but only 5 per cent of graduates have found employment there. With regard to industrial and company sociology, 3 per cent wanted to adopt this profession and 4 per cent have actually taken it up – a somewhat better ratio.

I won't trouble you further with these findings, but they do show you the broad picture. Herr von Friedeburg⁹ has put forward the – very convincing – hypothesis that the role of sociology today is essentially educational. This gives rise to obvious contradictions between educational requirements and wishes, on one hand, and the possibility of finding employment, on the other. There is always a certain tension between these two factors, and I would think this a subject not unworthy of investigation by critical sociology. The question such

a study would have to address is how it has come about in society that, in general, professions which give little satisfaction, which are taken up as a kind of sacrifice to society, which go against one's nature, are better remunerated, socially, than those in which one follows what, in more humane times, was called the 'human vocation'.¹⁰ Naturally, I am not speaking here about manual work but about the so-called 'mental' or 'intellectual' professions – the professions one imposes on oneself, practises against one's own inclination. This has some bearing on the issue I am discussing. It also modifies somewhat our understanding of the educational needs within sociology. If the aim of that discipline is examined very closely, it turns out, I believe, to be something quite different to the traditional idea of education. This aim, finally, is the need to make sense of the world, to understand what holds our very peculiar society together despite its peculiarity, to understand the law which rules anonymously over us. One hears much talk about the concept of alienation – so much that I myself have put a kind of moratorium on it, as I believe that the emphasis it places on a spiritual feeling of strangeness and isolation conceals something which is really founded on material conditions. However, if I were to permit myself to use this term one more time, I would say that sociology has the role of a kind of intellectual medium through which we hope to deal with alienation. This is, of course, a very difficult question. To the extent that one seriously pursues the goal implicit in such a concept of sociology, one estranges oneself from practical purposes, from the vocational requirements of society. It is extraordinarily difficult to reconcile truly profound sociological knowledge with the professional demands to which people are subjected today. One of the difficulties of sociology – and this brings me to the problem which will concern us today – is to combine these very divergent desiderata; that is, to perform socially useful work, as Marx most ironically calls it, on one hand, and to make sense of the world, on the other. By now, these two requirements have probably become almost incompatible. Earlier – as I can still remember very well – it was the most serious and wide-awake students who were most troubled by this dichotomy. Today this fact – that the better one understands society, the more difficult it is to make oneself useful within it – has probably become a regular part of the consciousness of the intellectually progressive sector of students, and at any rate, I expect, of those in this hall today. A contradiction of this kind – that the more I understand of society, the less I am able to participate in it, if I may put it so bluntly – cannot be attributed simply to the subject of knowledge, as it might appear to naïve awareness. On the contrary, this impossible, contradictory aspect of the study of

sociology is deeply bound up with the object of sociological knowledge – or, as I would rather put it – of social knowledge. Nor should you blame us, as sociologists, for being unable to reconcile these two incompatible factors. The inhomogeneous nature of sociology is something you will have to come to terms with from the outset. And you will have to try – consciously, not with a clouded vision unable to distinguish between what lies on either side of the dividing line – to acquire both the sociological skills and knowledge you need for your livelihood, and, at the same time, the insights for the sake of which, I suspect, most of you have decided to study sociology.

I know that one of the complaints which many of you – at least, I assume many of you were present on that occasion – made against the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, for whose policies I am no longer responsible¹¹ [*Applause*], was that it had failed to provide you with study guidance or a proper syllabus. Let me just say here – without wanting to minimize any omissions which may have occurred, for I am, heaven knows, no apologist for that learned body – that up to a point the discipline itself is responsible for those omissions. It is responsible in the sense that a continuity of the kind which is possible in, let's say, medicine or the mathematical natural sciences, or even, to an extent, in jurisprudence, is not possible in sociology. It cannot be promised, nor should it be expected.

So if you expect me, in these lectures, to explain how you can best plan your course of study, I am not quite equal to the task. At this university we have taken some care to ensure that you will find out about the things which are tested in the sociology exam, or at least hear something about them. But there is no royal road in sociology which would enable you to be told what are, first of all, the subject matter of sociology, then its main fields, then its methods. Or at least my own position, that I neither can nor wish to suppress, is that sociology really cannot be carried on in that way. I am sure it is a good thing, if you want to study sociology, to start by going to an introductory lecture and, at the same time, to attend some specialized lectures on empirical techniques or special fields which interest you particularly. But I believe that you will need to find your own way into this somewhat diffuse entity called sociology. I hope you will forgive me if I also say that if one takes seriously the idea of freedom, which in the academic sphere means academic freedom, or the free choice of study – which I believe you take just as seriously as I do – then this idea also applies, to some extent, to the way students compile their courses of study. If we were to draw up a precise syllabus for this discipline and oblige you to study according to it, that would certainly make some things easier. It would put those of you who are

primarily interested in exams – and I don't think less of you for that – in a position to reach your goal with a greater degree of certainty than probably is possible under present conditions. But, on the other hand, it would bring a degree of schooling, of standardization, into this new and still relatively free subject – free because of its newness – and I think that would run exactly counter to what you are hoping to gain from your studies.

There is, here, a curious contradiction which, as far as I can see, has not been given much thought in the debate about university reform. It is a very obvious contradiction, and one really does not need to be a great thinker to bring it to light. It is that, in the efforts being made to reform the universities, two contradictory motives are at work. One is a desire to streamline the university, to make it more like a school. This would strip away, in the name of vocational training, all detours, incidentals and much else. Such a view is entirely governed by the idea of load reduction, of rationalization along the lines of technical rationality. On the other side is the demand for a university reform which does not lead by the nose, which gives priority to free and independent thought. From the way I have formulated the matter it is probably not difficult to see how I think one ought to decide, nor is it a great secret that, to me, the second way is more important. However, rather than being satisfied with making this choice, I think it more worthy of an intellectually autonomous human being to realize that the difficulty of reconciling these two demands reflects the antinomy I spoke of at the outset. Apart from dividing your time between introductory lectures, on one hand, and highly specialized ones requiring all kinds of skills and aptitudes, on the other, therefore, I cannot give you instructions on how you should study sociology. I cannot do so for the very simple reason that I believe that if this study is to perform the educational function with which it has clearly been entrusted, it is a part of that function to preserve the autonomy of those being educated, who, like Goethe's famous mole, must 'seek their way in the murk'.¹²

In such disciplines – and this applies just as much to philosophy, which I refuse to divide strictly from sociology – the situation is unlike that in mathematics, for example, as it is taught in schools. There, one advances by totally transparent steps, each of which is quite obvious, from the simple to the complex, or whatever the progression might be. Years ago I wrote an essay in *Diskus* on the study of philosophy,¹³ and I think it would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to sociology as well. What I have to say is not intended to be frivolous, or to encourage anyone to go about their studies in an amateurish, indiscriminate way. It simply expresses my experience that academic study

differs emphatically from school work in that it does not proceed step-by-step in a mediated, unbroken line. It advances by leaps, by sudden illuminations. If you have been immersed in it long enough, even though you may sometimes find things difficult to understand at first, something like a qualitative leap occurs, simply through the length of time you have studied the material and, above all, reflected on it, and lights up things which were far from obvious at first. Perhaps I might remind you of the short piece 'Gaps' in *Minima Moralia*,¹⁴ in which, more than twenty years ago and long before I was confronted with these so-called 'pedagogical problems', I attempted to define this kind of progression. And I think you would do well to move with a certain liberality or patience in the dimension I have just tried to describe. If, at every step, you do not immediately insist on finding out whether you have understood that step, but just make the leap, I think this will benefit your understanding of the whole rather than hindering it. Of course, this does not mean that you should uncritically accept the *verba magistri* when their meaning is far from clear to you. It only means that you should not proceed from the outset in accordance with what I am not embarrassed to call a positivistic, Cartesian model, employing a step-by-step approach. According to the theory to which I am introducing you, it is highly uncertain whether that model has any such absolute validity as was once claimed for it. That is what I have to say to you on these matters for the moment.

The purpose of an introduction to sociology – as many of you may have extrapolated from what I have been saying over the past few minutes – raises very specific difficulties, which arise because sociology is not what in mathematics is called a 'determinate manifold'.¹⁵ Furthermore, it entirely lacks the kind of continuity which is generally supposed to be peculiar to the study of disciplines which impart 'knowledge conferring control', to use an expression of Scheler's.¹⁶ This will undoubtedly seem somewhat paradoxical to those of you who are embarking on this study with a certain naïve trust and whose existence I have to assume in a so-called introductory lecture. To us hard-boiled old hands it seems less paradoxical. If one has acquired the deep-seated certainty that the society in which we live – and ultimately, despite the disagreement of some sociologists, society is the primary subject of sociology – is contradictory in its essential structure, then it is not so terribly surprising that the discipline which concerns itself with society and social phenomena or social facts, *faits sociaux*,¹⁷ does not itself represent such a continuity. If one were a thoroughly devious and malicious person, one might even suspect that the scientific demand for an unbroken continuity of sociological

knowledge, of the kind which underlies the grand system of Talcott Parsons, for example, is itself infected by what might be called a 'harmonistic' tendency.¹⁸ This would mean that within the seamless exposition and systematization of social phenomena there lurks – unconsciously, of course, for we are witnessing the objective mind at work – a tendency to explain away the constitutive contradictions on which our society rests, to conjure them out of existence.

To enable you to familiarize yourselves with the ideas I shall be discussing first, I should like to recommend you to look at my book *Soziologische Exkurse*. This is for the real beginners among you. Read the first two chapters in particular, where these matters are not just set out theoretically but are underpinned by fairly copious material on the history of dogma.¹⁹

I imagine that many of you have come here expecting to hear, first, a definition of the field of sociology, then a division of this field into its different compartments, followed by a discussion of its methods. I would not dispute that such a procedure is possible or even that it is pedagogically fruitful. However, I cannot bring myself to proceed in that way, although I am aware that I am thereby asking rather more of you than many of you may have expected from an introductory lecture. I am also aware that by deciding not to proceed like that I am influenced by a number of theoretical positions which I can only set out for you properly in the course of these lectures. However, I do not want to present my divergent approach in a merely dogmatic way. I should like to explain why I cannot proceed as mentioned just now, or as required by so-called common sense, which, of course, scholarly consciousness is supposed to transcend but which – as can be learned from Hegel²⁰ – is not to be despised. So I should like to begin *e contrario*, not by introducing you to sociology and sociological problems, but by giving you an idea of what lies ahead. I shall do so by showing why I do not believe one can proceed in sociology in the sequence: definition of academic field; compartmentalization of academic field; description of methods.

First of all, I should like to mention something very simple, which you can all understand without any prior discussion of the problems of social antagonisms. It is that sociology itself, as it exists today, is an agglomerate of disciplines which first came into existence in a quite unconnected and mutually independent way. And I believe that many of the seemingly almost irreconcilable conflicts between schools of sociology arise in the first place – although I am aware that deeper issues are also involved – from the simple fact that all kinds of things which initially had nothing to do with each other have been brought together under the common heading of sociology. Sociology originated

in philosophy, and the man who first inscribed the name 'sociology' on the map of learning, Auguste Comte, called his first major work *The Positive Philosophy*.²¹ On a different level, empirical techniques for collecting data on individual social phenomena gradually emerged from the cameralistics of the eighteenth century, which were already active under the mercantilist system. These techniques of sociology, and the aspirations it derived from philosophy, were never really combined, but came into being independently of each other.

I do not want to overburden you in this first lecture with historical considerations, although to see how all this actually came about would not be the worst way of gaining access to sociology. All the same, if I am any judge of your own needs, I think it is better to approach the problems as directly as possible in an introductory lecture, rather than explaining at length where everything comes from. I am probably the last to be suspected of underestimating the historical dimension. As far as historical considerations are relevant, they will be covered in the introductory seminar which follows these lectures, and in the various tutorials connected with it.²² Nevertheless, I should like to say to you that this peculiar and somewhat disturbing inhomogeneity of sociology, its character as an agglomerate of disparate elements, is already to be found in Comte himself. Not explicitly, of course, as Comte was a scholar who adopted a highly rationalistic and even pedantic stance. At least on the surface he felt the need to present everything as if it had the coherence of a mathematical proof. But in this respect sociology is not so very different to philosophy: its famous texts, too, must be considered as a force-field; the conflicting forces beneath the surface of the seemingly unanimous didactic opinions, which are brought together more or less provisionally from time to time in systems or summaries, must be uncovered. With regard to Comte, it looks as if, on one hand, he subscribed quite clearly to the scientific ideal of knowledge, and that one of his great themes was to complain that the science of society did not yet possess the absolute reliability, the rational transparency and, above all, the unambiguous foundation in strictly observable facts which he ascribed to the natural sciences. In doing so he did not pause to reflect that this might have to do with the subject matter itself. For example – to give you my opinion straight away – he did not consider whether predictions were possible in sociology, or at least in the field of macrosociology, in the same way as they are possible in the field of the natural sciences in general. Of course, he gives reasons for sociology's position as a late-comer among sciences, but he does not worry unduly about this, assuming quite naïvely that if only knowledge could advance sufficiently, the science of society would be formed on

the model of the natural sciences, which had been so eminently successful. On the other hand, however – as I have already said – sociology for him also meant philosophy. This is a very difficult aspect of Comte, for it can be said that Comte was an enemy of philosophy above all else. In this he was the direct successor to Saint-Simon, his teacher, a sworn enemy of speculative thought, of metaphysics. Comte hoped that sociology would take over the function which, according to him, had been earlier performed by metaphysical speculation. Be that as it may, Comte, too, wanted sociology to go beyond the exploration of individual sectors, individual problems of epistemological practice, and to provide something like a guide to the proper arrangement of society. He arrived at this expectation from the very specific standpoint in which he found himself. On one hand, he was the heir of bourgeois emancipation, of the French Revolution; on the other, very much like Hegel, he was fully aware that – as Hegel was already pointing out – bourgeois society was being driven beyond itself.²³ This social antagonism, felt by Comte, was precipitated in the dichotomy between the principle of order and the principle of progress, between the static and dynamic principles within sociology.²⁴ But however that may be, on one hand, Comte espoused the outlook and the ideal of the natural sciences; on the other, he upheld a secularized philosophical ideal, in that he envisaged a situation in which society would be guided by sociology along what was, according to his theory, the correct path. You can see, therefore, how the dual nature or the ambiguity of sociology reaches right back to its theoretical beginnings. I shall say more about this, and about the original function of sociology in the narrower sense, in the next lecture.

LECTURE TWO

25 April 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will recall that I attempted in the last lecture to show you in rather abbreviated terms that the peculiarly dualistic character of sociology is already discernible where the term sociology was first introduced, in the work of Auguste Comte.

We have read in the press recently¹ that the deliberations at the conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, which many of you must have attended, failed to advance beyond certain antitheses existing within sociology. I believe this to be wrong because, as long as sociology remains what it was at its origin, it will not be possible to eliminate that antithesis – to resolve it, in the popular phrase. It will only be possible to give expression to this antagonism – if you wish to call it that – on the various levels at which it manifests itself. If, on the other hand, it is expected that details, and sometimes just minutiae, pertaining to this or that area of the discipline, should be presented at a congress of that kind, that seems to me to miss the point of such an occasion, which ought to give information on essential problems and not serve up detailed results. If the latter is demanded as the yardstick of such a gathering, the dispute or antagonism at issue is, in a sense, decided in advance. And that is precisely what concerns me: that the conclusion should not be preempted one-sidedly, but that the argument should be carried forward through all its stages, as far as that can be done.²

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe that something else is involved here – as you can see quite clearly from the example of Comte: it is

the problem of the general position of sociology in relation to politics. I know – and here I am again addressing the real or imagined beginners among you – that when a young person begins to study sociology, he or she often encounters a certain resistance at home. Because of the two syllables, ‘so-’ and ‘ci-’ [*Laughter*], it is feared that sociology is, *eo ipso*, something like an impregnation with socialism. But if the concept of sociology is understood as it came into being, with the historical meaning it has, it can be said that the opposite is actually the case. Such fears express a wholly naïve inversion of the facts. However, I can still remember very clearly my own time as a student, when I observed to my great astonishment that the fact that one was concerned with social questions did not automatically lead on to questions concerned with the introduction of a better or a proper society. On the contrary, at that time I encountered in a particular sociologist what I might call the attitude of the knowing wink, which gave me to understand: We sociologists know what it’s all about. We know that it’s all – the accent being on ‘all’ – a racket; meaning that there is no revolution, there are no classes: all that is the invention of people with an axe to grind. Sociology exists for the purpose of raising oneself above all that with a knowing wink. It might be said that what purports today to be sociology’s resistance to the allegedly theological inclinations of theoretical thinking is really nothing other than that gesture of the knowing wink, which implies that for sociologists, because everything is conditioned by social interests, no such thing as truth exists at all.

I should like to tell you that this conception of sociology, which was given its first and, perhaps, its most radical formulation by Vilfredo Pareto,³ seems to me to be fundamentally false. It is false, first of all, for the very simple reason that the negation of the idea of truth, which is implicit in this notion of the wholly ideological character of all society-related consciousness, makes it impossible to distinguish between true and false. Secondly, one cannot talk of false consciousness unless the possibility of a true consciousness also exists. I believe, or at least I hope, that in the course of this lecture I shall be able to indicate to you why this concept of sociology, which is very widespread today in both overt and covert forms, is wrong. It is wrong because it believes it can base itself on the subjective attitudes and behaviour of individual people, which are then generalized, while failing to perceive that such a thing as identifiable, objective, structural, social laws exist. To this extent – and this is what I am really leading up to – the controversy over methods in sociology,⁴ about which you have heard so much in recent weeks, is saturated with questions relating to content. I think you can only fully understand the passion and energy with which this debate on methods is being carried on if

you also keep in mind its implications regarding content, which lie in the direction I have just briefly indicated. Sociology, as it has come into being historically, has always had something almost technocratic about it, something of social engineering, a belief that if scientific experts, who make use of certain methodological techniques, are entrusted with the direct or indirect control of society, they will bring about the most balanced and stable possible state – that is to say, a functioning state, a state in which, through being extended and improved, existing systems are preserved.

Such an idea is already unmistakable in Comte – and I believe it would be useful for you to think at least for a moment about these historical aspects as a means of grasping the central points of the controversy within sociology. Comte's conception of sociology as a science was directed against the tendencies which, in probably unconscious agreement with Hegel, he regarded as the destructive tendencies within society.⁵ In his work sociology is already conceived as a kind of rational authority of a higher order, from which society is to be directed by purely scientific behaviour, through a certain kind of planning. Such planning would ignore the actual power relationships which always exist in society. To this extent Comte, despite his vaunted positivism, was a complete idealist, in that his interpretations of history and society were based entirely on the mentalities prevalent in different epochs – that is, the theological, the metaphysical and the scientific mentality – while disregarding the real social forces which underlie such mentalities. And indeed, if you take the trouble to peruse *The Positive Philosophy*, you will be faced with a very tortuous piece of reading, not overly leavened with the *esprit* for which French authors are noted. But if you study sociology you will have at least to acquaint yourself with this work. In doing so, you will see that of the two principles by which, according to Comte, society is ruled, and which, moreover, are very rigidly and mechanically distinguished by him, the static and the dynamic principles, the principles of order and of progress, all his sympathy, all the really positive accents, are on the side of order, of the static; and that the problem he really poses is how the dynamic element is to be held in check. That, incidentally, was the decisive difference between him and his teacher Saint-Simon, who was still on the side of the militant bourgeoisie and in whose work, consequently, the dynamic accent is far stronger. But even in his work a technocratic motif, such as the central role of technical experts, is present in embryo, even though it is not fully worked out, as the state of technology was not yet sufficiently advanced.⁶ It can probably be said, moreover, that the peculiar ambiguity of sociology is also manifested in the fact that precisely this motif – the idea that

society should be understood from the standpoint of technology and that technology should, up to a certain point, be made the key category for understanding society in general – was at the root of Marx's doctrine of the productive forces; in this he differed fundamentally from classical political economy, in which no such concept of productive forces existed. It is a very curious fact – which I point out to you only to show how deeply the contradiction that I have mentioned extends even into thinkers of the opposed tendency – that even Marx, who took an extremely critical and dismissive view of sociology in general and of Comte in particular, was infected by this ambivalence to the extent that he actually shared the belief in the primacy of technology with Saint-Simon and, if you like, with Comte. He took the highly optimistic view that the state of the technical productive forces must always assert itself as the primordial category of society, while yet, on the other hand, regarding the specifically social relationships, that is, the structure of ownership in relation to the means of production, as the determining factor in society. And I do not think it unfair to Marx to say that the question as to what is really the determining factor, whether the technical productive forces or the relationships of production, has not, to put the matter circumspectly, been unequivocally resolved in his work. However, it can also be said – and this gives you an idea of what can be called a dialectical conception of society – that such a doctrine of absolute priority, either of the productive forces or of the relationships of production, is not actually tenable, and that the balance between them changes according to the state of the conflicts within society. As long as it was in the interests of the rising bourgeois class to unfetter the productive forces, there was a certain equilibrium between productive forces and relationships of production. To that extent one might say that Marx was justified in regarding the productive forces as the primordial category. On the other hand, I would think it one of the points on which the present situation differs fundamentally from that analysed by Marx that today, simply because of the interests of those in control, and despite the whole so-called industrial society, the relations of social production hold supremacy over these technical forces.⁷ – You may be able to see from this that these problems, which I have set out here in order to show you concretely why sociology is not simply a unanimous discipline like medicine or law, arise not only from heterogeneous subject matter but from the specific nature of the discipline itself, from its inherently antagonistic character. That is what I wanted to bring to your attention first of all.

Sociology as conceived in the narrower sense, as the antithesis of what in Marx is called political economy or, more correctly, a 'critique

of political economy', was really retrospective from the first. Its purpose, as in the natural sciences, was to analyse a given reality in terms of certain elements, and then to make predictions. Within such a concept there was no place for the idea of spontaneity or of radical change. The only attempt to introduce the moment of spontaneity into this type of sociology is that of Vilfredo Pareto, whom I mentioned earlier. This attempt is very interesting because, despite the significant role assigned to the dynamic moment, its final outcome, through the so-called 'circulation of elites', is to preserve a social equilibrium rather than to abolish the irrationality of society itself. Far from doing the latter, Pareto himself saw the irrationality of society as its last word. For this very reason, because – as I said earlier – there can be no such thing as truth in Pareto's concept of sociology, sociology itself takes on the chaotic and irrational aspect which enabled it, without great difficulty, to place itself, in precisely the Paretian version, at the service of Signore Mussolini.⁸ In the tradition of his own country, where this idea has played a major role, Pareto took up once again the conception of the cyclical character of social motion,⁹ which goes back to Aristotle. In this he very clearly reflects the retrospective moment of sociology in the narrower sense – which, I would say, is preponderant today. According to this tendency, nothing 'different' or 'new' can exist, since society is and must remain nature in the sense of a blind repetition of seemingly natural processes – a view which experience, especially in Italy, appears to confirm. In this connection one needs to bear in mind that an infinitely alert, sceptical and sophisticated people has had to submit for thousands of years to countless dominions imposed on it, against which its hard-boiled knowingness has been of little avail. All that can be said is: *on a survécu* – one has managed to survive. This character of what I might call the science of survival has been inherent in sociology from the first. I do not wish to say anything derogatory or contemptuous about the idea of survival; even today sociology will have to preserve something of this motif of survival within itself if it is to fulfil its destiny. If the idea of survival were absent from it, if its interest were not that, despite everything, the human species should survive, it would indeed be an empty intellectual game. But the problem of survival is not to be solved today by social techniques and expert formulae in the way that was imagined earlier. And the debate in present-day sociology is not being carried on between the abstract schemes attributed to us, on one hand, and a concern with concrete problems and practical strategies for improving the world, on the other. It revolves essentially around the question how we are finally to break out of the vicious circle established by Pareto and countless other sociologists, including the great philo-

sopher of history, Vico. The relationship of the parties to the concrete is quite unlike the way it is presented in this public debate. I believe it is important to tell you this as it seems to me that public opinion, which has not taken the trouble to follow in detail the 'negotiations' which recently took place in Frankfurt, has obtained a completely distorted picture of the real questions at issue through the distinction it has drawn between an allegedly abstract, philosophical sociology, on one hand, and a supposedly concrete, practical one, on the other. It is of crucial importance to me that you should not be taken in by public opinion here.¹⁰ The critique of the monopolies of public opinion extends to the public reporting of scholarly debates and demonstrations. What you read in these reports is, as a rule, controlled and distorted to an unimaginable degree. Perhaps we shall have an opportunity . . . [Interrupted by applause] perhaps we shall have an opportunity in the introductory seminar to examine these distortions in more detail. I should be glad to make them the subject of discussion. [Applause]

If you asked me what sociology really is, I would say that it must be insight into society, into the essential nature of society. It is insight into what is, but it is a critical insight, in that it measures that which 'is the case' in society, as Wittgenstein would have put it,¹¹ by what society purports to be, in order to detect in this contradiction the potential, the possibilities for changing society's whole constitution. Ladies and Gentlemen, I would now ask you not to write down and take home what I have told you as a definition of sociology. It is an inherent characteristic of any dialectical theory – and the theory of society I am presenting to you in fragments here is a dialectical one – that, as Hegel said, it cannot be reduced to an 'axiom'.¹² You can only find out what such a theory is or should be by 'doing' it. Because of this I would say that any isolated piece of social insight or criticism which has been put into practice outweighs all general, comprehensive definitions, so that in failing to offer you such a definition here I am acting intentionally and from conviction. Exactly this kind of definition is a part of the traditional thinking which pins things down and organizes them in terms of rigid concepts. To criticize such thinking is the business of the position I am outlining to you here.

However, I should like to say something more about the special field of sociology, since you are, after all, entitled to have a somewhat clearer idea of what it is that sociology studies. This matter of the special field suffers first of all from the fact that, in the case of sociology, the field concerned is what Hegel would have called a 'bad infinity'.¹³ That is to say, there is nothing under the sun, and I mean absolutely nothing, which, in being mediated through human intelli-

gence and human thought, is not also socially mediated. For human intelligence is not something given to the single human being once and for all. Intelligence and thought are imbued with the history of the whole species and, one may also say, with the whole of society. I think we need to convince ourselves of this. It also applies to natural science and to technology. Please excuse me if I give a crude example, which I choose only to make clear to you something which easily escapes our awareness. It is that decisive discoveries in medicine, such as that of the cause of cancer and therefore a possible cure for cancer, would probably have been made long ago had not a wholly excessive amount of the social product been spent, for social reasons, on armaments or the exploration of empty stars for advertising purposes [*Hisses*] – in all parts of the world. [*Applause*] Well now, I don't know if your 'hissing' means that you believe we might be able to find the man in the moon [*Applause*], or what it is directed against. But it seems absurd to me that such elementary needs and problems, which affect human life as directly as the possible cure of allegedly incurable illnesses – which, I have been told by various doctors, could in principle be cured – remain unsolved for social reasons. The same applies to other technologies which are already possible and which, unquestionably, would not have to be steered one-sidedly in the direction of centralization – as the American, originally German, economist Adolf Löwe¹⁴ has demonstrated – but have not been implemented up to now for reasons of social organization, that is, simply because of the concentration of capital.¹⁵ I do not give you these examples because I wish to debate the question whether the case is really such in these particular instances. Such ideas immediately provoke the well-known controversies – the 'yes buts' – and there is nothing in the world, however bad, for which there are not the strongest possible arguments that it must be so and cannot under any circumstances be changed. I hope you will understand my comments as they are intended. At any rate, you can see from this crude example how problems which have nothing directly to do with society are nevertheless socially mediated, as we put it; and how far something which, in terms of its content, as a part of nature, seems to have no connection with society is in fact imbued with it. Divergent conclusions are drawn from this, depending on the basic position from which society is approached, that of science or of the humanities, the mind. On one side it will be said that sociology's interest should be directed at the essential, that it should deal with socially relevant matters and not with subjects which are of no interest. Stated in these abstract terms, few sociologists would disagree with such a viewpoint. However, it does raise a very considerable difficulty. First of all, one cannot predict a priori

which social knowledge should be regarded as relevant and which should not. It is possible that a concern with apparently out-of-the-way, obscure phenomena could lead to extraordinarily relevant social insights. This is because areas of knowledge and subjects which have not yet been caught in the net of the all-embracing *communis opinio*, which are not yet incorporated in this society's system of consciousness, have the best chance of providing us with perspectives which are not immanent in the system, enabling us to view it from outside. In this connection I should like to mention the theory of Sigmund Freud, which, however one may judge its importance for particular aspects of a theory of society, has been enormously fruitful for the subjective-empirical side of sociology, for defining the motivations of persons and groups. This theory would never have developed as it has if it had concentrated from the outset on the so-called main official problems, and became what it is only by addressing what Freud called the 'dregs of the world of phenomena'.¹⁶ I shall also mention the works of Walter Benjamin, which today are making an extraordinary impression on sociology, and especially on the critical theory of culture. Benjamin made it his principle to concern himself only with supposedly apocryphal subjects and phenomena, which have turned out to be more fruitful the more faithfully he followed this principle. But, of course – I should like to add – this concern for the ephemeral and inconspicuous, for that which is not pre-selected by the official stock of themes, must be accompanied by a latent interest in, and an eye for, what is essential. Had there not been, underlying studies like those of Freud, an interest in the history of civilization as a history of renunciation and repression; had there not been, behind Benjamin's conceptions, the theory of the 'dialectical image'¹⁷ as a socially necessary illusion, the phenomena which brought those theories to incandescence would never have started to glow. On the other hand, of course, these phenomena modified ideas which would otherwise have been abstractly applied to society, just as, indeed, it is a complete misunderstanding of what we of the 'Frankfurt School' – if I may put it rather grandly – are trying to achieve when we are criticized for neglecting concrete details in favour of abstract ideas. Exactly the opposite is true: both our sympathy and, in a sense, our thematic interest are directed at these concrete moments, although, of course, with an objective other than the usual scholarly aim of processing and classifying the material.

Naturally, this question of the essential always goes hand-in-hand with the practical. I would therefore say – partly to defend myself against objections which I detect in some of you – that within a theory of society certain subjective questions relating to social psychology are

unavoidably present. While these may not be accorded the same dignity as the structural problems of society, they are not without importance. They are important because – and I cannot help saying this – after Auschwitz (and in this respect Auschwitz is a prototype of something which has been repeated incessantly in the world since then) our interest in ensuring that this should never occur again – or, where and when it occurs, that it should be stopped – this interest ought to determine our choice of epistemological methods and our choice of subjects to be studied, even if they appear to be social epiphenomena. I remember once being reproached by a social theoretician, the wife of a very famous philosopher, for showing an exaggerated interest in Auschwitz and the questions relating to it. It may be that the murder of six million innocent people for a delusory reason is an epiphenomenon when measured by the standard of a theory of society, something secondary which is not the key to understanding. However, I would think that merely the dimension of horror attached to such an event gives it an importance which justifies the pragmatic demand that in this case knowledge should be prioritized – if I may use that dreadful word – with the aim of preventing such events. But I shall say more about the complex of the essential, and the criticism levelled at it, with which we also have to contend, in the next lecture.

LECTURE THREE

30 April 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I said last time that for me, and the conception of sociology which I am advocating here, one of the decisive criteria in the selection of subject matter seems to be that it should be concerned with the essential. I then said that the essential cannot be identical with the so-called 'grand themes'. Indeed, as often happens in the sphere of reflection, the grand themes are so heavily marked with the fingerprints of thought that it is difficult to achieve a truly primary relationship to them. It can therefore happen that we catch sight of the essential – and may even do so today – in relation to phenomena which seem to lack any such significance. In them the essence appears more completely than when we address the essential questions directly, equating them almost obsessively with what is regarded as great. I spoke against the concept of priorities, and you may also remember that I maintained that one cannot see straight away, just by looking at an object, whether it is essential or not. As a rule this is decided only in the execution, by what is revealed to us through the object. I mentioned a series of examples, so that you could picture what I meant in concrete terms.

Positivism rejects the question of the essential. But it does so in a quite different sense to that in which I tried to relativize the question by pointing out that we cannot determine whether an object is essential simply by looking at it directly. Perhaps you will allow me for a second – admittedly, a very long second, stretching, in fact, over the

entire lecture – to use a broad interpretation of the term ‘positivism’, not one confined to Viennese neo-positivism¹ in the strict sense or to the so-called analytical philosophy and theory of science now flourishing in America. I am using it in a wider sense which I cannot define at present other than by saying that it is the ‘scientific’ counter-position to the one we are adopting here. Understood in this way, positivism would rebut the demand that sociology should concern itself with the essential by arguing that there is no such thing as essence, or – to use the famous formulation by Schlick to which some of you recently drew our attention – that in reality there is only appearance, and essence does not exist.² This has diverse consequences. On one hand, of course, it seems to liberate us from the ‘nether-worldly’ aspect of traditional metaphysics denounced by Nietzsche³ – the search for something hidden and different beyond the world of appearances. Throughout history it has been one of the aims of enlightenment in the general sense to criticize such a search. On the other hand, however, positivism’s objection gives a rather peculiar meaning to the concept of sociology, which was admitted to me, though with a hint of an apologia, by positivist sociologists in America.⁴ This concept of sociology was taken over expressly, as you may remember if you were present [at the conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie], by the Cologne sociologist Scheuch, who claimed that the work of sociology should be largely governed by its methods of research, and not by the relevance of its subject matter.⁵ In other words, it should not be guided by the relevance of the knowledge to be expected – I am trying to avoid an overly crude and reified formulation – because nothing of that sort actually exists. This has given rise to the countless studies which simply apply any existing instruments of research over and over again, or which apply the same instruments to different problems or areas of subject matter; and then, if all goes really well, they may refine or modify the research instrument. Having myself invented such an instrument,⁶ which has been used over and over again, I am in the situation of being once bitten, twice shy. This use of research instruments as the determining criterion brings into sociology as a whole something which is very important to the debate about methods which I have placed at the centre of these lectures. It introduces the tendency to adopt what is administratively prescribed, to accept tasks imposed from above. For if there is no such thing as a choice between essence and appearance, if the concept of essence itself belongs to the realm of mere superstition, then, of course, the questions dealt with by sociology can be selected at will, on the basis of orders received. I use the term ‘order’, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the straightforward sense of a commission handed

down by a higher administrative authority. By carrying out such tasks the sociologist can perform what is called socially useful work. So curiously has the situation been reversed by now that the approach advocated here finds itself opposed by a sociologist like Ralf Dahrendorf, who does not radically negate the orientation towards the basic questions of society, but seeks to tone it down by adopting a mediating position along the lines of Robert Merton's 'theories of the middle range'.⁷ Dahrendorf reproaches critical sociology for concerning itself with the whole and not performing immediate, concrete tasks, thereby removing itself too far from praxis.⁸ Here, positivism appears to establish a relationship between itself and praxis which it denies to a critical doctrine of society. In so doing, of course – to say this straight away – it so modifies the concept of praxis that it means no more than to provide material for this or that measure taken within the existing social 'set-up'. Viewed subjectively, from the standpoint of what sociologists are actually doing now, this tendency amounts to converting the profession of sociologist into that of a salaried employee. In this way the research technician, the research employee, whose tasks are set by others and who can apply pre-existing methods to them, replaces the autonomous scholar, who selects the problems he addresses on the basis of his own experience, while developing his own techniques and methods. Naturally, he does so in conjunction with the existing, ever-increasing stock of knowledge.

I would ask you not to misunderstand me on this point. The criticism which has been levelled at the concept of essence over the centuries, as a result of which it is no longer possible to regard the world as having essence and meaning in the sense of a divine cosmic plan manifested in it, cannot be revoked. Essence itself – as I believe I have already tried to explain – is not identical with meaning, is not a positivity *sui generis*, but is the context of entanglement or guilt in which everything individual is entwined, and which manifests itself in every individual entity. To say that it 'manifests itself', however, is to make an implicit demand which puts a stop to all loose, amateurish, cliché-ridden thought. Hegel's statement that essence must manifest itself⁹ is entirely applicable to sociology, including its methods, whenever they concern the analysis of essence. That is to say, it is entirely otiose to talk of 'essence' or the 'essential laws of society', unless these laws are made visible in phenomena through interpretation; unless this essence is disclosed in phenomena themselves. And I believe that unless the axiom that essence must manifest itself as appearance is made into a very strict maxim of self-criticism, theoretical sociology is indeed in danger of lapsing into empty *Weltanschauung* and ossified clichés. The greatest danger threatening this discipline today is that

of becoming polarized in a bad sense: into the mere observation of facts, on one hand, and the irresponsible declamation of true or alleged insight into the essence of things, on the other. I need only remind you of the criticism directed at phenomenology from the standpoint of dialectics – to which I may have made some contribution in *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*¹⁰ – in order to show that an interest in essences cannot be the same thing as the desire to elicit essences directly from phenomena through contemplation, in a way which is immune to contradiction and beyond the reach of argument. In saying this I do not wish to discount the element of truth which is present in phenomenology. Anyone who lacks the ability to perceive the essential truths which shine forth from isolated social phenomena, anyone who cannot read individual *faits sociaux*¹¹ as ciphers for a wider social reality, ought, judged by my conception of sociology, to steer clear of that discipline and become a social expert, or whatever such a function might be called, for he is not a sociologist. No more is he a sociologist, however, if he is content with that perception, if he fails to test his insight against the essentially historical conditions under which the phenomenon concerned has come into being, and to which the phenomenon gives such diverse expression.

To the question: ‘What is essential?’ I must give you, to begin with, a somewhat clumsy answer, despite the restriction I placed on the concept of essence in my last lecture. My answer is intended simply to point the direction – still maintaining the fiction that you are not yet familiar with sociology – in which a sociology or a science of society interested in essences would have to look. And so I would say that the objective laws governing the movement of society, which decide the fate of human beings, are essential. These laws are human destiny – though a destiny, of course, which is to be changed. For, on the other hand, these laws contain the possibility, the potential, that all will be different, that society will stop being the coercive union in which we find ourselves. But these objective laws are valid only to the extent that they express themselves in social phenomena, and not if they are no more than a mere deduction from pure concepts, however deeply such deductions may be rooted in social knowledge. I shall give you an example: let us assume that it is an essential question whether or not the relationship between classes is an intrinsic part of present society. I think we shall agree at least that the question: ‘Does class play a part or not?’ is a decisive question in judging present-day society. Furthermore, if one bears in mind that Marx was the first to formulate the concept of class objectively and with its full trenchancy, one will need to relate this concept of class to the process of production, and not merely to the consciousness of individual people.

Class-consciousness is a secondary product, but it is not produced automatically by the historical process. Contrary to Marx's prognosis and to the situation in the middle of the last century, class-consciousness is tending to diminish. This diminution is caused by phenomena which are described as integrative by the predominant academic sociology, and their existence cannot be denied simply because they conflict with sacrosanct beliefs. Now it might be said, in keeping with a theory based on essential laws, and particularly the law of the antagonistic development of bourgeois society, that all these are mere epiphenomena. What matters, as always, is the position of individual people within the production process – whether they control the means of production or are severed from them. Whether or not they are conscious of themselves as proletarians, for example, is relatively unimportant; it comes under the heading of mere ideology and does not affect the essential structure of society. Well, at any rate, that's what the Bible says. But to say that is to point out the problem that I am presenting to you, rather than to solve it. If there really is a gradual process whereby those who are objectively defined, according to some threshold value, as proletarians are no longer conscious of themselves as such, and even whereby they emphatically reject such a consciousness, then, as a tendency, no proletarian will finally be left knowing he is a proletarian. In that case, despite the objective situation, the use of the traditional concept of class can easily become a dogma or a fetish. There comes a point – and I believe that this is a case in which the empirical aspect of sociology comes into its own – where a concept such as class-consciousness must be simply confronted with the reality of individual consciousness. Of course, classes are not defined by class-consciousness. But if the proletarians, who allegedly have everything to gain and nothing to lose but their chains,¹² no longer even know that they are proletarians, the practical appeal to them takes on an ideological moment. Sociological knowledge must, unquestionably, take account of this. Under these circumstances I believe that many sociologists, including the few, or some of the few, who once attached importance to essential laws and to insight into the objective structure of society, may now send all that to the devil and take refuge in the mere observation of facts.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I think it will be of decisive importance for the intellectual well-being of sociology that such a thing should not happen. I can perhaps best show you what I mean by the interaction of essence and appearance if I point out that the conclusion to be drawn in this case is not: 'All right, class-consciousness doesn't exist any more. That's metaphysics, and in reality there is only social stratification, which must be measured by the subjective standard of living.'

That really would contradict the proposition that sociology should be orientated towards the essential. Rather, one ought to try to explain the non-appearance of class-consciousness, or the disappearance of the proletariat, in terms of the objective laws of society, from its essential regularity. I expressed this problem twenty years ago in *Minima Moralia*, by posing the riddle: 'Where is the proletariat?'¹³ A good deal has already been done towards a solution. To mention only one factor, Spencer was the first to diagnose the integrative tendency of society:¹⁴ the fact that the network of socialization is woven ever tighter, so that even those who were outside bourgeois society, or rather half-outside it, like the industrial proletariat in the 1830s and 1840s, have been increasingly incorporated. One should also consider that the sheer quantity of goods produced as a result of technical progress is so vast that it benefits even those who are supposed to have nothing to lose, but who actually do have something to lose through the growth in the quantity of commodities. Or one might call to mind a specifically sociological problem, which, incidentally, illustrates how intertwined insights into the essential are with what is called 'specialist sociology'. It is a fact that within the totality of the working class the proportion of those doing material or productive work in the traditional Marxian sense, those directly involved in the sphere of production, has fallen very sharply, especially in relation to the sector concerned with repair. I have mentioned these different factors somewhat unsystematically; in reality, integration is the encompassing concept and the other moments I have mentioned to you are secondary moments which can be subsumed under integration. You should not see them, therefore, as factors operating side-by-side on the same level. The last thing I wish to do, in pointing in this direction, is to tell you anything wrong or, in setting up general models, to put forward particular sociological theses which are not tenable in themselves. All I mean to say is that, on one hand, sociology should hold fast to certain essential definitions, such as that of classes, which continue to exist, decisively, in the dependence of most people on anonymous and opaque economic processes. On the other hand, however, sociology should deduce from this developmental tendency, or at least understand in relation to it, those modifications which are causing such a fundamental datum as that of classes no longer to manifest itself in the traditional form. Through this small model of the dialectic of appearance and essence I may have given you an idea of what we really mean by the relationship of critical sociology to empirical research, which we do not regard as non-existent beside theorizing, as our positivist opponents allege. On the contrary, I hope I shall be able to demonstrate that the conception which I have the

pleasure of expounding to you really has far more to do with the empirical, takes empirical facts far more seriously, than does generalizing sociology; but we shall come back to that. At any rate, you may already have seen that it is not just a manner of speaking when we claim that what is important to us is not rampant, unbridled theory, but an interaction of the kind I have indicated to you, an interaction which actually constitutes the concept of the dialectic itself.

So please make a note of the following: firstly, the essential concerns the laws of motion of society, especially the laws which express how the present situation has come into being and where it is tending to go; secondly, these laws are modified, and are valid only as far as they are really manifested; thirdly, the task of sociology is either to explain even the discrepancies between essence and appearance in terms of the essential – that is, theoretically – or to have the courage to abandon concepts of essence or general laws which are simply incompatible with the phenomena and cannot be dialectically mediated. One must have this courage, too; and among the convictions we may be called upon to stand up for today, I do not believe this to be the most despicable. What is important is that in abandoning some traditional categories we remain true to the tradition they represent, instead of thinking we have to join the big battalions and jettison the ballast of troublesome concepts which cannot easily be verified.

I would ask you, incidentally, to understand terms such as ‘essence’ or ‘concept’ with a certain liberality. These lectures are not the place for me to analyse such concepts in detail, or the truly philosophical problems they raise. I deliberately approached the concept of essence by speaking about sociology’s interest in essential questions – questions which are finally crucial to the survival and freedom of the human species. I now ask you not to understand this concept of essence in the narrower epistemological sense, as something existing in itself, something conceptual which is prior to facticity and is to be perceived in its purity. Most of what I have referred to as essential here – as those of you who are listening attentively will have noticed – is not, logically speaking, essence in the sense of individual concepts, but essence in the sense of individual laws, which manifest themselves and are relevant to society as a whole and to the fate of individuals within it. Something similar applies to the notion of the concept. If I use concepts such as ‘capitalism’ or ‘class’, they should not be understood as conceptual definitions, stating that class is such-and-such, or defining capitalism as this or that – as is the case with Weber.¹⁵ Rather, they imply a pre-existing context of propositions and judgments, an over-arching theoretical construct, which cannot be abstracted from individual concepts or entities in isolation. I tell you

this only because a commonly raised objection to the theory I am expounding is that it constantly operates with the concept of essence, in contradistinction to those of proposition, judgement and law. In reality, of course, the term essence as used here only expresses the emphasis we place on such over-arching contexts as can be formulated in judgements; they are essential, but should not be understood as mere concepts in the narrower, logical sense.

Regarding the subject matter of sociology, about which there will be more to be said in an introductory lecture course such as this, I would draw your attention once more to the peculiar difficulty inherent in the problem of pragmatism. By a curious reversal, the position opposed to mine appears to be the more practical, because – through negating all interest in the essential – it can concentrate unhindered on any tasks that come its way; whereas a type of knowledge which does not automatically engage in such praxis, but is really interested in essential laws – if you will permit that formulation – may well be accused of quietism. In reality, the type or ‘practicism’ cultivated by positivism is by its nature one which always and necessarily leads to the preservation of existing social systems. This praxis should be seen as that of improving the existing social systems from within, while excluding any consideration relating to the whole, simply because it mistrusts concepts such as the social system, the whole and the essential law, consigning them to the famous hell of metaphysics. I mention this in order to show you a problem on which Habermas has worked intensively in recent years,¹⁶ the extraordinarily complicated dialectic underlying the question of praxis in sociology. This is the question whether praxis follows from knowledge acquired through sociology and social science, or whether this knowledge is simply applicable to certain given forms of praxis. That is an extraordinarily profound and radical difference, and one on which I would ask you to reflect.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the central concept of sociology, the very concept which very many sociologists would like to throw overboard today, is the concept of society. For sociology – that abominable hotch-potch of a word – means: the *logos of societas* – the knowledge or science of society. And our next task will be to explore this concept of society more deeply. I would like to point out to those of you who are interested that there is a publication relating to the concept of society as I understand it, the article ‘Gesellschaft’¹⁷ which I wrote for the Protestant dictionary *Lexikon der Staatswissenschaften*. I shall refer to this article in what I have to say about the concept of society, and the debate with the positivist position which arises from it. I shall not limit myself to the article, however, but expect to go beyond it in important respects. – Thank you.

LECTURE FOUR

2 May 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Would you please close the door now; otherwise we shall lose too much time. – I should like first to answer a question which has arisen either from a misunderstanding, or from my haste during my closing formulations in the last lecture. It appeared to one of your fellow-students, who raised the matter and is much to be thanked, that in defining the links between positivist sociology and a pragmatic sphere, I wanted to sever the dialectical conception of sociology from praxis altogether. Obviously, that is not the case. On the contrary, I would say that a vigorous praxis, which relates to the total structure of society and not to isolated social phenomena, needs a total theory of society. In addition, a praxis of the total society, that is, a structure-related praxis, is only possible if it in turn analyses structural relationships. That is, it should analyse the tendencies and power constellations within the existing society in principle, and not remain within the framework of mere particular questions. I am anxious to correct that misunderstanding, to avoid giving the impression that the social theory of which I can, of course, give you only fragments in these lectures is quietistic. The appearance of quietism can easily arise because the difficulties of change naturally stand out far more clearly if one has the whole of society in view. They are less prominent – and this again is a kind of pragmatism – if they are seen within the scope of individual constellations, where structural relationships appear far more moderately and less harshly than in a theory of social structure. I should

like to add one other thing which ought, perhaps, to be said at this point. Do not think that, because of the divergence I have pointed to, I undervalue particular improvements of the kind proposed by positivist sociology, when it is guided by pragmatism. It would reflect a damagingly idealistic form of abstractness if, for the sake of the structure of the whole, one were to trivialize the possibility of improvements within the existing framework, or even to accentuate their negative aspects, as has been done often enough in the past. That would express a concept of totality which disregards the interests of people living here and now, and would entail a kind of abstract confidence in the course of world history which, at least in this form, I simply cannot muster. I would say that just because the present social structure, for reasons which we cannot analyse properly in this context, has the character of something ill constructed, of a monstrously agglomerated 'second nature', even the most pitiful interventions into the existing reality can have a far greater importance – because it is almost a symbolic importance – than they might seem intrinsically to possess. I think, therefore, that we should be more sparing with the accusation of so-called reformism than may have been possible in the last century and in the early part of this. How one views reform depends in part on how one evaluates the possibility of total structural change, and as this possibility no longer manifests itself with the immediacy it had in the middle of the last century, the question of reform is also seen in a quite different perspective. That is one point I wanted to make. However, I do not think that because we ruthlessly define the blocked state and disproportionate power relationships of the present situation, we should therefore be branded with quietism or resignation. For anyone who shrinks back from analysing the existing structure for the sake of a thesis to be demonstrated or a goal to be achieved thereby betrays both truth and theory; and that is quite certainly not what has ever been meant by the unity of theory and practice.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like now to talk in more detail about the central concept of sociology, the concept of society. As you may know, a number of sociologists consider that this term is no longer usable.¹ The first thing to be said is that if you expect me to follow the custom of many other disciplines and offer you a definition of the term 'society', you will find yourselves bitterly disappointed, and not because I believe myself incapable of formulating such a definition. In the discussion of the concept of society I think I shall give you enough information to allow you to form a sufficiently clear idea of this concept. But such a concept is not a legal term definable once and for all, since it contains an inexhaustible wealth of historical

reference. I should like here to quote a statement of Nietzsche's which also appears in the *Exkursen*: 'No concept in which a whole process is summarized semiotically' – which means, for those of you who have no Greek: no concept which is a sign or an abbreviation for an entire process – 'can be defined; only that which has no history is definable.'² Later in these lectures I shall show you the central importance which history has for sociology, that it is not mere background for social knowledge but is actually constitutive of all social knowledge. Naturally, that applies also to the central concept of the discipline, the concept of society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it was rightly pointed out to me at the last introductory seminar³ that Herr Schelsky's critique of the concept of society⁴ does not imply that one can actually do without such a theoretical concept. He argues that there are various types of society, some of which still exist side-by-side, and that such societies should not be simply subsumed or synthesized under a single concept. Of course, there is a difference between, for example, the society of capitalist countries and those in the Soviet or Chinese spheres of influence, or again, those of the Third World. And, naturally, I am far from wanting sociology to neglect these differences, which sometimes go very deep, or to replace them by a kind of 'hotel gravy' which can be poured indiscriminately over any dish [*Laughter*]. I hope you do not believe that. But I should like to remind you of what I referred to in the last two lectures as sociology's interest in the essential questions of society. And I would point out that if, in a certain kind of sociology which classifies various types of society, you come across terms such as the 'horde society' or the 'hunter or gatherer society', these terms mean something quite different to what we refer to when we talk of society in the strong sense which this concept took on in the nineteenth century. That is something entirely different. The terms for classifying different societies, some of which come close to the usage of ethnology and anthropology, really refer to different forms of communal living and of the production and reproduction of life by human beings. They refer to basic types of arrangement by which people gain their livelihood and which define the forms of their coexistence. However, when we speak of society in the strong sense – and here I am deliberately using an expression from so-called 'bourgeois sociology', the sociology of Max Weber, which, in terms of its basic intentions, can be included among the positivist sociologies – we are referring essentially to the element of 'socialization',⁵ which does not apply in the same manner to the societies I have just mentioned. This latter use of the term implies that there exists between people a functional connection, which varies considerably, of course, according to

the historical level of development of the society, and which leaves no-one out, a connectedness in which all the members of the society are entwined and which takes on a certain kind of autonomy in relation to them. In the types of society I enumerated earlier, by contrast, the functional connection between people is much looser and the interplay between the individual people and the whole does not take place. In addition – and this is very important – different social groups exist more-or-less side-by-side in such societies, without there being between them any relationship important enough to shape these groups in a significant way. Let us consider a very primitive society of this kind, a gatherer society before hunting has been organized. Because of a certain uniformity of historical development which, curiously, is to be observed again and again in the most diverse countries, the situation is such that while all these people exist more-or-less on the level of the gatherer, the different groups or – if I must use the term – the different societies of gatherers exist fairly independently, and take relatively little notice of each other. One result of this – and a very important one for sociology – is that, simply because these archaic forms of society exist side-by-side independently of each other and because their interests intersect relatively little, gatherer societies have a somewhat peaceable character; they do not attack each other in the way which is generally the case with developed societies. What Thorstein Veblen called the ‘peaceable savages’⁶ are no doubt to be found here. ‘Society’ in the stronger sense, therefore, represents a certain kind of intertwinement which leaves nothing out; one essential characteristic of such a society – even though it may be modified or negated – is that its individual elements are presented as relatively equal, endowed with the same faculty of reason. They appear as atoms stripped of qualities, defined only by their self-preserving reason, and are not structured in terms of estates in the original sense. Thus, as early as the nineteenth century, the Swiss sociologist Bluntschli described the concept of society – as Helge Pross tells us⁷ – as an essentially bourgeois term, or a ‘concept of the third estate’.⁸ In the state-capitalist and socialist forms which developed later, this moment of the functional interconnectedness of the whole, and of the virtual equality of those comprising it, has been maintained, despite the consolidation of forms of domination and all the dictatorial features of these societies. This functional interrelationship, therefore, is what I mean first and foremost by society, and I have defined it in these terms on a number of occasions previously.

Now, Hans Albert, in his first polemical essay against Habermas, has criticized the concept of society I am advancing here as amounting to no more than the trivial observation that ‘everything is connected

to everything else', and as an abstract concept in the bad sense. Albert is the positivist sociologist who has conducted the argument against the dialectical theory of society most energetically in recent years.⁹ His standpoint is largely that of Popper; at least with regard to Albert's intentions there is clearly extensive agreement between the two. I should like to address Albert's criticism, as it does, indeed, represent a serious objection.

The reply I would give is that society, in its 'socialized' form, is not merely a functional interrelationship between the socialized people of the kind referred to by Albert, but is determined, as its fundamental precondition, by exchange. What really makes society a social entity, what constitutes it both conceptually and in reality, is the relationship of exchange, which binds together virtually all the people participating in this kind of society. It is also, in a sense, the precondition of post-capitalist societies – if I may state the matter cautiously here – in which there can be no question that exchange will have ceased to take place. As for the charge of abstraction, it involves, it seems to me, one of those typical confusions between the subject of knowledge, the knower and the theory, on one hand, and the form of that to which the theory relates, on the other. The abstract element here is not an idea which is content with the trifling observation that everything is connected to everything else. It is something which I believe to be a central feature of any theory of society, and I would ask you to take this central feature very seriously and to note what I now have to say. Ladies and Gentlemen, the abstraction we are concerned with is not one that first came into being in the head of a sociological theoretician who then offered the somewhat flimsy definition of society which states that everything relates to everything else. The abstraction in question here is really the specific form of the exchange process itself, the underlying social fact through which socialization first comes about. If you want to exchange two objects and – as is implied by the concept of exchange – if you want to exchange them in terms of equivalents, and if neither party is to receive more than the other, then the parties must leave aside a certain aspect of the commodities. In discussing equal exchange, I must for the moment disregard the question whether a violation of equivalence is not implied in the concept of exchange itself; for the present we are concerned only with constructing the concept to the extent that it is constitutive of society. In developed societies the exchange takes place, as you all know, through money as the equivalent form. Classical political economy demonstrated, as did Marx in his turn, that the true unit which stands behind money as the equivalent form is the average necessary amount of social labour time, which is modified, of course, in keeping with

the specific social relationships governing the exchange. In this exchange in terms of average social labour time the specific forms of the objects to be exchanged are necessarily disregarded; instead, they are reduced to a universal unit. The abstraction, therefore, lies not in the abstracting mode of thought of the sociologist, but in society itself. Or, if you will permit me to use this term once again, something like a 'concept' is implicit in society in its objective form. And I believe that the decisive difference between a positivist and a dialectical theory of society lies in this objectivity of the concept inherent in the subject matter itself; positivist sociology denies this process of abstraction, or at least relegates it to the background; its concepts are formed solely within the subject which observes, classifies and draws conclusions. I would ask you not to misunderstand this to mean that the process of abstraction, as we understand it, takes place within the individual subjects performing the exchange. Media such as money, which are accepted by naïve consciousness as the self-evident form of equivalence and thus as the self-evident medium of exchange, relieve people of the need for such reflection. How far this reflection has ever consciously taken place, and how far the process of abstraction has always asserted itself over the heads of human beings through the simple necessity of exchanging like for like, need not concern us for the present, though I incline to the latter view. At any rate, once you grasp this functional exchange relationship as constituting the essence of socialization, with all the social problems which the elaboration of the exchange principle entails, the concept of society ceases to be the seemingly empty abstraction stating that everything is connected to everything else for which Herr Albert takes me to task. Such a concept of society becomes, through its very nature, critical of society, in that the unfolding of the exchange process it refers to, objectively located within society itself, ends up by destroying society. To demonstrate this was really Marx's intention in *Capital*. Society, therefore, if it is to continue to reproduce the life of its members – as we should have to formulate the matter today – must transcend the concept of exchange. The transition to criticism thus coincides with a perception of the way in which the objective structure is itself conceptually determined, whereas, were it not so determined, but merely an ordered agglomeration of facts, the notion of a critique of society would be nonsensical. You can see, therefore, that the concept of exchange is, as it were, the hinge connecting the conception of a critical theory of society to the construction of the concept of society as a totality. Perhaps I may sum up what I have just been saying with a few sentences from the discussion of the concept of society¹⁰ in the *Evangelisches Staatslexikon*, of

which many of you are probably not aware. Such a concept of society would

take us beyond the trivial observation that everything is connected to everything else. The bad abstraction of that proposition is not so much a product of flimsy thought as a bad basic constituent of society itself: the role of exchange in modern society. Abstraction takes place objectively in the universal practice of exchange, and not merely in scholarly reflexion; in this abstraction the qualitative nature of producer and consumer, the mode of production and even the need which the social mechanism incidentally satisfies, are disregarded.

What is also disregarded, I should add for the sake of completeness, is the concrete form of the objects to be exchanged.

The primary element is profit. Even humanity itself, the subject of needs, which is reduced to a mere 'clientele' <today>,¹¹ is now socially preformed to an extent surpassing all naïve imagining, not only by the technical state of the productive forces but also by the economic conditions, however difficult that may be to verify empirically. Prior to any particular social stratification, the abstractness of exchange value supports the dominance of the general over the particular, of society over its compulsory members. It is not, as the logic of the <scholarly> reduction to units such as the average social labour time makes it appear, socially neutral. The reduction of people to agents and media of commodity exchange conceals the domination of people by people. That remains true despite all the difficulties now confronting some categories of a critique of political economy. The form taken by the total interconnectedness requires that all subordinate themselves to the law of exchange if they do not wish to suffer ruin, quite regardless of whether they are subjectively <governed> by a <so-called> 'profit motive' <or not>.¹²

You will see from this how emphatically society is to be understood as a functional concept. In view of what I have told you, society cannot be regarded, as common sense suggests, as the sum total of all the people living at a particular time or in the same epoch. Such a merely quantitative agglomeration would fail to do justice to society as society. It would be really no more than a descriptive concept which did not define what Marx called the 'inner connection'¹³ holding society together. But ours is a functional concept¹⁴ in the additional sense that, by virtue of existing for others and being defined essentially as workers, human beings cease to be something existing in itself, a mere fact, but define themselves by what they do and by the relationship existing between them, namely that of exchange. The

positivists argue that our central concept, that of society, is not something given, that one cannot put one's finger on such a concept, or say: This thing here is society; I can show it to you just as a doctor can point in a test tube to the pathogen causing an illness, if he has been able to discover it. To this we can reply that just because of that definition – because the concept of society is a concept defining, on a universal scale, relationships between elements, namely individual human beings who work, and not merely the agglomeration of these people – it is not enough to point to the individual elements. In other words, the positivist criterion of a significant datum, that one must finally be able to point to something physical in order to say that it is the substrate which is sought, is inapplicable to the concept of society. Brecht, with the gift of splendid simplification characteristic of him in his best moments, once expressed this situation by saying that the essential truth about society had 'slipped to the functional level'. This had gone so far, he said, that if one wanted to find out something about the Krupp conglomerate, for example, and then looked at the different Krupp factories, one would be able to discover absolutely nothing about the essence of this functional level, that is, about the processes of production and exploitation, and the consequences they had for human beings.¹⁵ Through his friendship with Karl Korsch,¹⁶ Brecht had formed a certain sympathy for positivism. He had probably not quite thought through the implications of the alternatives at issue here – and heaven forbid that I should criticize the poet for that – otherwise he would have realized that the functional concept of society that he himself had formulated actually negated in principle the positivists' criterion of the tangible datum. I would even say that in his formulation he had stated the difference between our position and that of positivism in a striking and conclusive way.

But what I have been saying to you has one further implication. It is that while the functional concept of society is not physically given, while it cannot be directly apprehended as a mere fact, it can certainly be ascertained and known, and not by some irrational mode of knowledge. It is knowable simply by showing the complications and contradictions to which the unfolding of this principle of socialization necessarily gives rise. This unfolding, however, cannot be pursued beyond the social facts, but only in its interaction with a determinate reality. I believe that will have become clear to you after these first four lectures. – Thank you. [*Applause*]

LECTURE FIVE

7 May 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like first to announce a lecture by the very famous psychoanalyst Frederick Wyatt,¹ to be held at 8.15 this evening in the Institut für Sozialforschung. Professor Wyatt will talk about the socio-psychological causes . . . [Hisses] Is that meant for the lecture on social psychology, or the volume of the loudspeaker? I see. When you 'hiss', you should always make that clear. It might be useful to distinguish between the two, so that the lecturer knows where he stands. For example, hiss if he should speak louder, but if you disagree with what he is saying, scrape your feet in the time-honoured manner. [Laughter] I would recommend the revival of that custom in the interests of better understanding. At any rate, Professor Wyatt will talk this evening about 'the socio-psychological causes of student unrest in America'. I can imagine that many of you will be interested, and I hope you will come along. I must confess to an oversight on my part. Last Thursday, when the lecture was already arranged, I forgot to announce it here, so that you are being notified rather late. On the other hand, I should be very embarrassed if the lecture were not well attended. If it is too well attended, you can be sure that we shall relocate to Lecture Room V.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the last lecture . . . [Hisses] Well now, I don't know if this stupid appliance [Laughter] is malfunctioning again. – Is that better? – In the last lecture we dealt with the problems associated with the concept of society. I tried to show that this concept is indispensable, even though it should be seen not as a given but as a category defining relationships – and even though there are no

isolated physical data to which you can point and say: 'Voilà – that is society.' Incidentally, when I say that you cannot point to isolated data to exemplify the statement: 'that is society', I should like, off the cuff, to make a minor correction. Perhaps something of that sort does exist after all. There are such outbursts of the 'popular spirit'. For example, if – let's say – in earlier times a girl was expecting a child without being married, and was subjected to some kind of traditional expression of popular protest; or even now, when people come together in a 'riotous assembly' to complain about something which does not conform to the community spirit – wherever there is a manifestation of what, in an American sociological work very famous about seventy years ago, was called 'folkways',² you come up against what is called 'society' quite directly. You encounter modes of behaviour which neither have rational causes nor – perhaps this is all too true – are derived from individual psychology. They are long-established rites – somewhat like the Upper Bavarian practice of cladding a miscreant in a goat skin and driving him around a cornfield, and suchlike phenomena [*Laughter*]. These are phenomena which illustrate what Durkheim was referring to when he said that a certain moment of 'impenetrability' constituted the very essence of the social.³ When you come across forms of collective behaviour which have an element of inaccessibility about them and, above all, are far more powerful than the individuals who manifest the behaviour, one might say that you are on the receiving end of society. With slight exaggeration one might say, in keeping with Durkheim's observation, that society becomes directly perceptible where it hurts. For example, one might find oneself in certain social situations, like that of someone who is looking for a job and 'runs into a brick wall' has the feeling that all doors are shutting automatically in his face; or someone who has to borrow money in a situation in which he cannot produce guarantees that he can return it within a certain period, who meets with a 'No' ten or twenty times in a definite, automated manner, and is told he is just an example of a widespread general law, and so on – all these, I would say, are direct indices of the phenomenon of society.

Incidentally, I would strongly encourage you to look at Sumner's book *Folkways*, which brings together material of this kind. It may have been a mistake on my part not to have drawn sufficient attention, in this whole discussion of the concept of society which plays such a central part in the debate over positivism today, to this stratum of phenomena in which you get an almost bodily experience of what society is. Incidentally, the study on 'social conflicts today',⁴ published jointly by Fräulein Jaerisch and myself, is certainly relevant to the analysis of such social situations, in which one can directly

observe what it is that constitutes society. This study is only available as a special edition at present, while the *Festschrift* for Wolfgang Abendroth, in which the article appears, has not yet come out, as far as I know. I consider it to be a not inconsiderable part of the teaching of sociology to enable you to have a living experience of what can be called society in this sense, to get it under your skin.

Equally, of course, it would be wrong to hypostatize society as a kind of 'second-degree datum', meaning an order of reality on a higher level, as Durkheim did. I believe it will be helpful in differentiating the concept of society if I say something about this view. Because society is not physically given, not directly tangible, it is elevated to the status of a mental or spiritual entity.⁵ To the extent that it is a category of mediation and is thus conceptual, this has a certain truth. However, society should not on that account be regarded as a 'second-degree datum' which, although it is supposed to be non-physical, is endowed with all the attributes which traditional positivism – and even present-day positivism, as in the version found in the work of Rudolf Carnap⁶ – ascribes to physical data. This is the peculiar tendency of Durkheim's entire sociology: although he is fully aware that social facts cannot be equated with isolated sense data, he nevertheless attributes to them the character of palpable realities of the kind I have just tried to illustrate. Implicit in this manner of metamorphosing the social into a 'higher-level fact' is an inclination to repeat the process of reification and autonomization, to which society is subject through its immanent laws, within sociology, instead of critically reflecting and dissolving it. This reification of society, a reification which always contains an element of mere appearance, is accepted as an absolute. This gives rise to the temptation and the tendency, from which Émile Durkheim was far from exempt, to posit the thing-like quality of society as something positive, to submit to it. In other words – and I believe this is very important for a definition of the concept of society – this view suppresses that fact that the concept of society refers to a relationship between people, as I attempted to make clear in my last lecture. To hypostatize this relationship as a 'higher-level reality' is to disregard the fact that society is always composed of individuals. A concept of society which omits the individuals of which society is composed and between whom this relationship exists is nonsensical – no less absurd than the opposite concept which regards society as something reducible to the various individuals making it up, anything other than these individuals being dismissed as mere hot air.

At this point it may perhaps be clear to you what the dialectic is really about. For many of you will undoubtedly have heard that what

the so-called Frankfurt School teaches is a dialectical view of society. Those of you who have not taken a course in philosophy may be inclined, following a widespread and carefully orchestrated intellectual trend, to say: 'Oh yes, what the Frankfurt people call sociology is really just philosophy that has got on to the wrong track, and that they are trying to sell as sociology.' [*Applause and laughter*] I am therefore quite pleased to take this opportunity to show you, by the example of the relatively simple model I have developed, in what sense the concept of society is, and must be, inherently dialectical.

Last time I demonstrated in great detail that this concept should be understood as a mediated and mediating relationship between individuals, and not as a mere agglomerate of individuals. Today, in my admittedly cursory remarks on Durkheim's concept of society, I pointed out that it is equally inappropriate to regard society as an absolute concept beyond individuals. It is neither the mere sum or agglomeration, or whatever you wish to call it, of individuals, nor something absolutely autonomous with regard to individuals. It always contains both these moments at the same time; it is realized only through individuals but, as the relationship between them, it cannot be reduced to them. On the other hand, it should not be seen as a pure, over-arching concept existing for itself. This fact, that it cannot be reduced to a succinct definition – either as a sum of individuals or as something existing, rather like an organism, in itself – but represents a kind of interaction between individuals and an autonomous objectivity which stands opposed to them, is the macrocosmic or, as it tends to be called today, the macrosociological model of a dialectical conception of society. It is dialectical in the strict sense – and here you can see very clearly why sociology must be conceived dialectically – because the concept of the mediation between the two opposed categories – individuals on one side and society on the other – is implicit in both. No individuals, that is, people existing as persons with their own claims and, above all, performing work, can exist except with regard to the society in which they live, any more than society can exist without its concept being mediated by the individuals composing it. For the process by which it is maintained is, of course, the process of life, of labour, of production and reproduction, which is kept in motion by the individuals socialized within the society. That is a very simple and – if you like – elementary example of what could be said to make it obligatory to adopt a dialectical approach to society.

Of course, you may say that such a concept requires more in the way of epistemological justification than I have given you, which is taken from the sphere of social experience rather than of knowledge

itself. However, in this instance I should like to make an exception, and operate a division of labour; so I would say to you that a complete explanation of the concept of the dialectic – which I have demonstrated here rather than deriving it from first principles – would have to take place within the discipline of philosophy. For a view which takes neither individual moments nor their concept to be true being, but regards both poles as mediated by each other and thus diverges from commonplace naïve logic, also plays a decisive role within our discipline. Such a view can only be elaborated by means of philosophical considerations which, were I to embark on them here, would occupy us for the rest of the semester. And then you – or at any rate some of you – would rightly complain that I had promised you an introduction to sociology but in reality had conducted a course in logic – and that I should not wish. Very well, let us continue.

The model I presented to you at the beginning of this lecture made it clear that the concept of society can be perceived intuitively in a certain way, even if only indirectly. Naturally – and I address this to those of you with a scientific turn of mind – such experience is fallible; it can be based on error or mere prejudice, and interpretations of immediate social phenomena – in cases where mediating verifications are absent – are liable to degenerate into clichés, into stereotyped assertions. On the other hand, however, the concept of society, in the sense in which I elaborated it in the last lecture in relation to the concept of exchange, is not an indefinite entity, but can be deduced, if you like, from its own essential dynamic. In the last lecture I tried to show you that society, especially today's society, is an essentially dynamic concept. I did so by pointing to the functionality of society, to the fact that society is a relationship between people, and is neither something existing outside or above human beings nor something that can be located merely within the individual people. In addition to this definition in terms of dynamics, a further definition must be offered, which is situated within capitalism and is neglected by positivism. This is based not primarily on dynamic laws but on facts which are first encountered in an isolated and thus, in a sense, a static form, and only later related together. The kind of dynamic I am talking of now is generally neglected as a basic, underlying dynamic of sociology. It is normally consigned to a separate chapter on 'dynamics' or 'social dynamics', just as there are chapters on 'social conflict' or 'social control'. What is overlooked is that the specific constitution of the society in which we live – which, as a stage or form of dominance is prototypical of society throughout the world – is governed by a dynamic principle. This is quite simply the principle that capitalist society, regarded as such a prototype, can

only survive – as I believe I have already indicated – by expanding. You will have observed – and this takes us into the epiphenomena of the economic cycle – that the measure of a real or supposed economic boom is generally taken to be the degree to which the economy shows a tendency to expand. And it is also generally the case (I can only state this here; the explanation is to be found in the *Political Economy*⁷) that as soon as the capitalist economy, and thus capitalist society, begins to stagnate, it is in immediate danger of crisis and therefore in indirect danger of collapse. It is an inherent law of capitalism that that which is can only maintain itself by extending itself, by expanding.

Now, that having been noted, you can see to what extent society – if we proceed not from its abstract concept but from what it actually means in our time – is an essentially dynamic concept. This has also been observed by the sociology which take its starting point from political economy but belongs to the tradition of Auguste Comte, which, as has been rightly noted, is in sharp contrast to the kind of thinking of which I am trying to give you a preliminary idea in these lectures. Within this tradition, the dynamic aspect of society was noted by Herbert Spencer, whose *Principles of Sociology*, though long-winded, contains, unlike the work of Comte, an abundance of concrete social insights and real social perceptions. As far as you have time for such a lengthy piece of reading within your studies, I would recommend Spencer as extremely worthwhile. I would think that very many of the great sociological systems of later times, if one may call them such – even Durkheim's – cannot be understood without a knowledge of Spencer. He defined the dynamic of society in terms of what could perhaps be best described as an increase in integration.⁸ Durkheim took over this thesis of growing integration more or less directly as it is formulated in Spencer.⁹ To begin with, this thesis means nothing other than that larger and larger sectors of society enter a relationship in which they are interdependent. When I spoke to you last time about the difference between the concept of society as applied to a horde or gatherer society, and to 'society' in the modern sense, I already had in mind this idea that socialization, the web of social relationships spun between people, is growing ever tighter. To make this quite clear to you: if you had gone into the countryside, say, fifty years ago – I'm deliberately choosing a relatively short timespan – you would have found so great a difference between town and country in Germany – and, if you like, a certain independence of the form of livelihood in rural regions from that in the urban, commercial and industrial spheres – that you would have had the feeling that the connection between the two was relatively slight. At that time there were still countless peasants in the country and provinces

who had never been to a town and who looked on the cities or even the middle-sized towns in their rural areas with a certain respect. I know the story of a man who grew up in a village near Aschaffenburg without ever having been there, and who was told by his father: 'Aschaffenburg – that's a place to respect!' That was more than eighty years ago, and I do not think that anything similar would be conceivable today, because the network connecting town and country has become incomparably more dense. That has happened not only through the communications media, fashion and suchlike, but simply through economic processes, such as the movement of countless industries to the country.

Apart from that, this concept of integration, which is extremely wide-ranging, has quite different connotations, and I shall mention some of them because I am sure they have often come up in discussions in which you have been involved. The concept also means that society in the first half or, more precisely, the second quarter of the last century included an entire class which, while, on one hand, performing social labour, on the other, stood in a partly external relationship to society. This class has now been encompassed and integrated, in one meaning of that term; above all, it has been completely permeated by and enmeshed in the dominant ideology – in what is called the culture industry. If, however, the term integration is taken to mean the process by which larger and larger units are rationally shaped and made 'overviewable', the concept of integration implies from the first that the more people are integrated, the more completely they tend to be adapted to the system. They are shaped according to the logic of adaptation and turned into microcosmic replicas of the whole.

This, too, was not always the case. I pointed out earlier that the concept of society is dialectical in the strict sense that it can be reduced neither to individuals, on one hand, nor to society, on the other. This is seen very clearly in the sociology of Spencer, who believed that the concept of advancing integration implied at the same time a differentiation of society – and, one might add, a differentiation within the individuals themselves – according to different functions, as a result of the division of labour brought about by integration.¹⁰ At the time when Spencer was writing, about the middle of the nineteenth century, there was undoubtedly something to be said for this view. Since I have already begun talking in this introduction about these two categories of integration and differentiation, which are not discussed in *Soziologische Exkurse*,¹¹ which you are probably all reading or have read, I should like to point out that the relationship between integration and differentiation is also subject to a dynamic. That is to say that the advancing integration brought about by the advancing

rational control of labour processes does not automatically lead to advancing differentiation. Rather, society – and I am talking, Ladies and Gentlemen, about society in its existing forms – seems to develop a tendency, from a certain point onwards, to push forward integration to the utmost while at the same time suspending differentiation. This seems to me a very important divergence between the situation in Spencer's time and the way society appears today. The ultimate reason for this is probably to be found in the labour processes, in that, as a result of the ever-advancing division of labour, work processes become more and more alike, to the point that the supposedly qualitative differentiation through the division of labour is finally abolished [*aufgehoben*] – again a dialectical motif – as a logical consequence of this very division of labour, so that, in the end, anyone can do anything. This contains an infinitely fruitful moment, a moment by which society points the way beyond its current form characterized by the division of labour. Under present conditions, however, this reversal of differentiation within society – provided we are talking about the existing society – has extremely problematic consequences for the consciousness of human beings. I have told you this only to indicate how the concept of society contains an historical dialectic with regard to the concepts of integration and differentiation which are essential to it, and which originate in sociology rather than directly in economics.

I should also like to say something which may not be necessary in itself, but is needed in order to protect the points I have been developing from certain misunderstandings. The emphasis I place on the concept of society, and my insistent use of it, may, of course, be readily misunderstood in the 'organicist' or – to use the language of the German cultural reaction – the 'holistic' sense, to mean that society is a sum or agglomeration of elements which is simply more than its parts. Formally, there is a certain resemblance between such a view and the definition I have proposed of society as a relational category which is not exhausted by the individuals composing it. This resemblance provokes critics of the dialectical theory of society to adopt a trick which is particularly popular today, whereby this type of critical sociology is castigated no longer as utopian or avant-garde – the critics now are far too subtle for that – but as a kind of antiquated and obsolete metaphysics which any really progressive and enlightened person is obliged to renounce. I am very concerned that you should be able to recognize and see through this *topos*, this trick, which is very widely used against the view of society I have been proposing – or at least that you should be suspicious of it and form your own, independent opinion on these matters.

I tried to show you last time that the concept of society has its objective basis in the conceptual nature of social objectivity itself, or in the relationship of abstraction introduced into it by exchange. In other words, the totality within which we live, and which we can feel in each of our social actions, is conditioned not by a direct 'togetherness' encompassing us all, but by the fact that we are essentially divided from each other through the abstract relationship of exchange. It is not only a unity of separate parts, but a unity which is really only constituted through the mechanism of separation and abstraction. In this respect it is the exact opposite of all organicistic or holistic conceptions of the kind which may perhaps be applied, with retrospective projection, to agrarian regions, although they are not even valid there, but certainly cannot be applied to the highly industrialized countries prototypical of society today. If one wanted to characterize the concept of society itself, then the notion of the system, of an order imposed in a somewhat abstract way, would be far more adequate than the notion of organic wholeness. This should be qualified, however, by adding that in talking of the system of society we are referring not to a systematization carried out by the observer but to a systemic character located within the society itself.

Since the word 'alienation' is used *ad nauseam* today, I try to dispense with it as far as I can. Nevertheless, it does impinge on the subject under discussion, and I shall mention it at least as a general heading for what I mean. We live within a totality which binds people together only by virtue of their alienation from each other; and when I said that the present society is mediated only through individuation, that also had a critical sense which I did not stress in what I said earlier. For it is precisely through the insistence on the *principium individuationis* – in other words, through the fact that within the dominant forms of society individual people seek their individual advantage, profit – that the whole is able to survive and reproduce itself at all – even if while moaning and groaning and at the cost of unspeakable sacrifices. I should like to add, however, that precisely because the whole or the totality of society maintains itself not on the basis of solidarity or from the standpoint of a comprehensive social subject, but only through the antagonistic interests of human beings, this society of rational exchange is infected in its constitution and at its very root by a moment of irrationality which threatens to disintegrate it at any moment. – Thank you.

LECTURE SIX

9 May 1968

[Ladies and Gentlemen,

I pointed out last time that because the totality of society is maintained not by solidarity but by the antagonistic interests of human beings,¹ by its antitheses, and not by the existence of such a thing as a unified social subject, society is developing tendencies of advancing irrationality, side-by-side with its advancing rationalization. And if I were to sum up what the 'dialectic of enlightenment' means in real social terms, it is precisely this moment. I should like now to go a step further and touch on the question whether the increasing integration of society is not accompanied in certain deep strata, as a visible phenomenon, by concurrent tendencies towards disintegration. This disintegration would result from the fact that the different social processes, which are welded together but arise largely from divergent or contradictory interests, oppose each other more and more, instead of retaining the moment of neutrality, of relative indifference towards each other, which they had in earlier phases of social development. I think this emerges especially clearly in extreme situations of late bourgeois society, such as fascism. In his work *Behemoth*,² which I regard as the most apposite socio-economic account of fascism that has yet been produced, the late Franz Neumann has shown that this integration under fascism was a superficial affair, and that beneath the very thin veil of the total state there raged an almost archaic and anarchic struggle between the different social groups. Whether that can be transposed to the more pacified late-bourgeois society, whether something similar is discernible

in what is called pluralism, whether this pluralism, too, contains such tendencies towards disintegration, I would not venture to decide, but would merely bring the problem to your attention. I myself would not be inclined, without further qualification, to talk of such tendencies in this context, for the simple reason that I regard the pluralism we hear so much about as itself largely ideological. That is to say, I believe that the coexisting forces are in reality embraced and fundamentally determined by the all-controlling social system in which we live.

An objection frequently made to the concept of society today is that it is a metaphysical concept. It is very interesting – and it is a piece of modern ideological doctrine of which I should like to make you aware – that critical ideas are no longer attacked, as used to be the case, as corrosive or aggressive or in suchlike terms. Instead, the attempt is made to dispose of them by saying that they have fallen behind current developments, and that any view which does not accept the existing order is a kind of residue of ancient metaphysics, ontology, or the disguised theology for which I am criticized by Scheuch,³ or whatever else. Ladies and Gentlemen, the fact that this kind of apologetics is predominant today throws light on the general state of society. Clearly, the potential for enlightenment, for intellectual maturity, the possibility of becoming conscious of social processes instead of simply accepting them without reflection, has increased so far that retrogressive, restorational arguments are no longer enough, and that what has fallen behind can justify itself only by purporting to be the more advanced. This is done primarily in the following way: those tendencies which are, in a broad sense, positivistic, and which therefore hold fast to what is given, can present themselves as the more advanced because, in face of the overwhelming power of existing circumstances over human beings, possibilities going beyond the given can easily take on a somewhat chimerical air. That is, so to speak, the positive motivation, the element of reality to which this line of argument can appeal. But if you observe how ossified this argumentation is, in that a mode of thinking which earlier was described as utopian, or, at any rate, extremely opposed to the existing order, is now regarded as old-fashioned, retarded, as mere superstition, you will perhaps form a certain mistrust of that position.

It is, moreover, interesting, if I may make this comment by the way, that this form of thinking, as it now manifests itself in the domain of social reflection and theory, made its appearance a good while ago in the aesthetic sphere. It was present in those tendencies – in the 1920s, for example⁴ – which presented a revival of long-defunct, pre-bourgeois forms as the truly modern, which rejected the concept of progress as unmodern, without in the least having reflected upon it,

and which operated with concepts such as the 'end of modernity'. Fascism itself carried this ideological suggestion that to be unmodern or anti-modern today was in fact to be modern. This in the meantime has been transposed to the apologetics against a critical theory of society. The essence of the argument is quite simply that metaphysical, pre-critical thought operated centrally with the concept of essence and with an antithesis between essence and appearance, all of which was swept away by the Enlightenment; critical theory also operates with the concept of essence – Marx took it over explicitly from Hegel; therefore critical thinking lags behind the Enlightenment.

I hope to have shown you in the first lectures what I mean by essence [*Wesen*] and its antithesis [*Unwesen*], and that essence understood in this way is by no means a mere fantasy, but a category of mediation without which the so-called facts themselves would not be what they are. And I believe that, in understanding the viewpoint I am presenting to you, everything depends on your following this argumentation and, if possible, reduplicating it within yourselves. All the same, after dwelling so insistently on the problem of the mediation between fact and concept, between *fait social* and society, I should like to point out that even if one starts off – as empirical research in society has to do – from individual facticity, one is forced to acknowledge the kind of definitions which I have tried to elaborate for you. Think, for example, of the events which occurred in Berlin after the student demonstrations following the attempt to assassinate Rudi Dutschke – events which can hardly be described as anything other than a pogrom.⁵ If these events are traced back to local conditions, the specific situation in Berlin, they may perhaps be explained – and I say perhaps – by the fact that they emerged first in this extreme form in Berlin, and not somewhere else, although in terms of epistemology or of the theory of science it is always a virtually insoluble problem to explain why something does not occur in one place, but somewhere else. Proofs of negative quantities – that is, the non-existence of phenomena that ought to be expected – have something uncommonly laboured about them. And it is, so to speak, a spur to all theoretical thinking in the social sciences – a spur I should not keep quiet about, since it does somewhat undermine our confidence in being able to explain everything – that everything imaginable can be explained *post festum* [*Laughter*] – may I ask what is amusing you? – that everything imaginable can be explained more or less plausibly *post festum*, whereas, when it's a matter of predicting whether a social fact – even of the simplest kind – will first appear here or somewhere else, the result is usually failure. One might just as well have imagined, a priori, that these serious disturbances and pogrom-like reactions could

rather have occurred in a different town with a more reactionary atmosphere than Berlin, with its large worker population and its reputation for being, in principle, a very enlightened, sober-minded and progressive city. [*Laughter*] You can see from this that while it is very easy to explain after the event why those things happened in Berlin, it would not necessarily have been possible to do so beforehand. I am pointing this out in order to show you that a concept which plays a considerable role in the positivist conception of sociology, the concept of prognosis – the idea that sociological knowledge ought to enable us to make correct predictions – is not without some justification. I should like, as far as I am able, to show you the moments of truth even in this conception, which is in principle opposed to the one I am presenting to you – to preserve them for future use. I certainly do not believe that it is the purpose of sociology to make prognoses, because such prognoses are always immanent to the system, and also for the deeper reason that they have something ‘practacist’ about them, seeking to commit sociology to the performance of set tasks. But if a theory is wholly incapable of making plausible predictions – in addition, I should stress, to its other functions – that really is an objection to the theory. I believe, in other words, that one of the tasks of a fully developed critical theory of society would be to assimilate the prognostic elements, while cleansing them of their narrow practicism.

But let me come back to our example. I should acknowledge here that when I give examples the strict dialecticians among you will rightly object that I am not really entitled to use the category of the example. However, I cannot actually presuppose the dialectical standpoint here, and I believe that it is entirely legitimate in an introduction of this kind to elucidate wide-ranging abstractions to the point where everyone knows what they mean. I try to compensate for this, as far as I am able, by not offering irrelevant examples, that is, ones by which this or that fact pertaining to the logic of science can be demonstrated. I try, as far as possible, to select examples which have a meaningful relationship to my subject, the theory and concept of society. So much for the principle of selection for the examples you have already heard and will hear in greater numbers as I proceed.

You can give all kinds of local and specific reasons why that pogrom occurred in Berlin, although, as I have said, it would be possible to offer counter-arguments which were equally plausible. But if you think of the most convincing reason, the campaign against the students waged by the Springer press over a considerable period, that campaign would not have been effective had it not corresponded to a certain potential among the consumers. For one of the features of the

present society – and this applies especially to the tabloid press – is its capacity to convert information into consumer goods. That is to say, the information itself provides those to whom it is addressed with pleasure or, more correctly, surrogate pleasure, substitute gratifications. Consequently, without this potential for anti-intellectualism, and, above all, without the resentment against people, such as students, who are not yet fully locked into the heteronomy of the work process, it is unlikely that this campaign, which cannot be severed entirely from commercial motives, would have been possible in this form. But we are moving here in a theoretical and speculative realm, and an empirical approach using quite different methods would be needed to make a serious investigation into these very important problems. To do any justice to the phenomena of the press campaign, I believe one would have to address a phenomenon or syndrome which goes far beyond the press campaign itself. One would be concerned with the whole complex of anti-intellectualism, which is ultimately connected to the division of physical and mental labour, and to the resentment of those excluded from mental work and leisure, a resentment which, however, because of mechanisms of social blinding, is directed not against the causes but against those who really or supposedly profit from them. At this point I cannot refrain from pointing out that the idea of the privileged material status of students entertained by very wide sections of the population is itself largely mythological [*Applause*], and that it would be no bad thing to hold very vigorous demonstrations against the thoroughly mendacious argument that students are dissatisfied because they are too well off. It would undoubtedly be easy to produce tangible evidence to the contrary. I do believe that clichés such as that of the over-fed student living in luxury and tearing about in his car [*Laughter*] contribute in no small degree to the resentment I have been discussing.

What I should like to do is certainly not to minimize the specific causes of the events in Berlin – I have no wish to defend either the city authorities' hyper-active policies and over-zealous use of the police, or the press which stirred all this up. I wish only to make you aware that even those events and countless other concretely observable social processes are only seemingly concrete. There will no doubt be many among you who, without being fully aware of it, are just slightly susceptible to the enchantment emanating from the word 'concrete'. I have been told the sad story that when the Nazis had arrested someone on political suspicion and wanted to discover his or her allegiance, they took it as an index of communist leanings if the person concerned made over-frequent use of the word 'concrete'. If you consider the role played, inversely, by the concept of the concrete in value-free,

positivist sociology, you can get some idea of the curious affective charge which has attached itself to this term. The most likely reason, Ladies and Gentlemen – as should really be clear to you already from what I have said in these lectures – is that our world is so dominated by abstract regularities, and the relationships between people have themselves become so abstract, that the concrete has become a kind of utopia – which it is in any case. People believe that by being totally concrete and pointing to the *hic et nunc* they really have everything in the bag – regardless of the fact that the allegedly concrete, the facts, are themselves to a large extent an expression of the abstract order of relationships which I have attempted to demonstrate to you in defining the concept of society. This means that even in empirical research, as one's thought advances, one is driven again and again, and relatively quickly, to adopt precisely the concept of the social network which not only is prohibited by the rules of scientific empiricism but also flatly contradicts the libidinal connotations of the term 'concrete'. The situation is very similar in current investigations of the work climate in companies – undoubtedly a legitimate task of industrial sociology. It emerges constantly and relatively quickly that attempts to explain this climate by conditions in the factory concerned have something inadequate about them. There are, of course, shades of difference from one factory to another, but the decisive factors point back to wage agreements, the wage agreements point back to the compromise situation between the employers' associations and the labour unions and finally to power relationships, and therefore to structural problems of society itself. What I want to say, therefore, is that although I have somewhat emphatically distinguished the concept of society as a theoretical concept from the facts, you should not assume a radical discontinuity between these entities. You should realize not only that society can be perceived, almost physiognomically, in individual phenomena, but that, far more important, all explanations of individual phenomena lead on much more quickly than is supposed to something resembling the social structure. I should like to bring to your attention something which may illustrate this most vividly. If one criticizes an existing social system and proposes particular improvements on the basis of this criticism, such proposals inevitably and very soon come up against a limit which cannot be understood in terms of the individual points of criticism. It can only be understood in terms of the pre-established order of society, which is extremely sensitive to changes of even a quite particular kind which might – however gently – call its existence into question.

I shall give you an example of this, taken from the much-discussed and really very important sphere of political education. If political

education is criticized as ineffective – and the studies carried out under the direction of Manfred Teschner⁶ have explored these questions in depth – one often finds that political affairs, the Basic Law, the party system, so-called pluralism, the position of firms and unions, and other such questions, are generally presented in only a very formal manner. Their social background – the actual questions of power and control of the means of production and social wealth which lie behind such phenomena – are ignored. If we probe more deeply we find that in our democracy, as our system is formally defined, there are two simultaneous requirements on this point: on one hand, citizens are to be instructed in democracy, while, on the other, no awkward questions are to be raised. This is intended to mean that nothing which implies a narrow, party-political standpoint should be taught. However, this limitation precludes from the start the discussion of structural questions, which ought to be addressed by political education. That is to say, a teacher who, instead of explaining to children about social partnership, told them something about the antitheses lying behind it could be sure that a large number of indignant parents would immediately write to the school authorities complaining that he was engaging in political propaganda, misusing political education for party purposes, and so on. As a result, he will not dare to continue, and all sorts of intermediate authorities will see to it that he toes the line.

I believe that these phenomena, this limit which is very quickly applied to improvements, however modest, from within the system, demonstrate to you more clearly than anything else that the concept of society, although not a fact, is nevertheless something extremely real. This paradox, that precisely that which is non-factual, not directly convertible into sense perceptions, has a higher, not lower, degree of reality, in that it determines the lives of people more than the so-called ‘concreta’ which directly confront us – this paradox seems to me important. It is really brought home to you – and I should like to recall once more the statement of Durkheim that I have already quoted several times⁷ – when you encounter the moment of resistance, the point where you can go no further, when you either sink into a viscous mass or, more probably, bang your head against a wall. That is how you can convince yourself from below, as it were, by rising up from the level of so-called ‘concretion’, of the reality of what is all too easily dismissed as a merely metaphysical concept. The phenomena I have mentioned to you, and a great many others which belong to the same category, can be described as experiential phenomena. For example: why does one come up against a brick wall when one tries to practise political education in a way that gives substance to the concept of democracy? Such phenomena are ongoing

experiences, as are the other examples I have given you. It seems to me now that the strongest argument against a positivist view of society is that, in placing the concept of experience so far in the foreground in the name of 'empiricism' or 'logical empiricism', it actually fetters experience. I would say it is no accident that Hegel called his first major work the 'Science of the Experience of Consciousness' but, as we know, only completed the first part, the *Phenomenology of Mind*, after which his work changed direction.⁸ The kind of experience I have been describing is, I would say, channelled, guided by positivism, and this guidance prevents anything like experience from taking place. This is probably the reason why the concept of experience – closely linked to that of the concrete which I discussed earlier – has also taken on such an extraordinarily normative significance: on one hand, genuine experience, that is, experience of something new which has not existed before, is hardly possible in the world in which we live, while, on the other, science, by the system of rules it imposes on knowledge, no longer permits such experience. I would not hesitate to define the idea of a dialectical theory of society as something like the restoration of, or – to put it more modestly – the effort to restore, the experience which is denied us both by the social system and by the rules of science. It might be said that what I am attempting to set out here is something like the basic principles of a rebellion of experience against empiricism, to state the matter in a somewhat pointed form. At the same time, I would reiterate that the kind of experience I have tried to elucidate with all my examples is not some random exercise of thought, but is guided, and imposed on us, by existing problems – such as the problem of the impossibility of a truly adequate political education. Unless one expressly forbids oneself such experience, one cannot really escape it.

Society as experience, therefore, from what I have said, is what is encountered, and at the same time is what is recognized as the condition of those moments of society which are criticized and found to be – in a quite simple, immanent sense – inadequate; but this same condition prevents those moments from being really and effectively changed. And the danger of the official ideal of science is, precisely, to conjure away this experience. Schelsky, in his polemic against me, which was exactly this kind of positivist polemic, took exception, above all, despite his concept of a 'transcendental theory of society', to the concept of 'unregimented experience'. He saw in this, quite rightly in my view, the crux of the opposition to positivism.⁹ But if that is the case everything depends on this experience remaining in closest touch with the facts, and not rising arbitrarily and extraneously above them. This, again, is the mediation between our position and,

not positivism, but positivist methods. I would point out, incidentally, that this moment which validates living experience in contrast to reified and ossified experience has been expressly emphasized by quite different schools of sociology and from a quite different standpoint, that of so-called phenomenological experience – for example, by the entirely phenomenological school of the American sociologist Alfred Schütz,¹⁰ whose theoretical position is very close to that of my colleague here at Frankfurt, Thomas Luckmann.¹¹ The critique I have set out here is, therefore, by no means the preserve of the Frankfurt School, since the same problems have cropped up in very different corners of sociological thought. – Thank you.

LECTURE SEVEN

14 May 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As befits the fiction I have to maintain that you are beginners in sociology, I now have to . . . [*Hisses*] Is that better? – Is it better now? I wonder if there is someone – Herr Kulenkampff,¹ would you be good enough to attend to this machine? – Thank you. – Is it better now? – Herr Kulenkampff will be kind enough to inform the technicians – meanwhile, I'm going to have to yell. [*Laughter*]

I should like to say something today about the problems of dividing up the field of sociology. Those of you who are working for the degree examination or have something similar in mind will already have read that the syllabus distinguishes between 'general sociology' and 'specialist sociology'. Before I delve into the problem from the point of view of the theory of science which is bound up with this division, I should like to say something prescientific and crudely reasonable: first of all, this division has a certain practical reason. This reason is that, on one hand, there are the theoretical, fundamental questions of sociology and, on the other, there are individual aspects of the subject matter which are in part connected to the skills you have to acquire during your sociological training, so that the theory can be practically applied. This distinction, however questionable, reflects to an extent the twofold nature of sociology which I have pointed out to you. On one hand, a sociology governed by the practical requirements of socially useful work, and, on the other, a sociology which seeks

real insight into that which holds the whole commotion together. You should bear in mind – and I think it's good to do this right at the beginning of your sociological studies – that sociology does not comprise a closed theoretical structure, like law or medicine as traditionally understood. It is an agglomerate of quite disparate disciplines which have slowly grown together, although they have entirely different historical origins. The whole area which is today called empirical research developed from so-called 'cameralistics', and especially from the mercantilism of the eighteenth century, when ideas on a planned economy and administration emerged for the first time, and necessitated an overview of all kinds of needs, wishes and structural relationships within the population. There is a good, or, I should say more modestly, an informative, summary of this in the essay in the *Lexikon der Staatswissenschaften*,² for which the Institut für Sozialforschung as a whole is responsible. What is known as theoretical sociology, on the other hand, arose from philosophy, and the name 'sociology', which, as I have told you, is not much more than a hundred years old and originates in Comte,³ has a somewhat arbitrary aspect; one might almost say that there has been no great philosophy which was not in some way concerned with social problems. It has happened many times throughout the history of philosophy that the logical and epistemological disciplines were seen merely as an auxiliary apparatus of ethics and thus of the theory of society, which from ancient times has been associated with ethical questions. This happened because ethics, as the theory of human behaviour, of right behaviour, always and necessarily included social behaviour, the behaviour of people towards each other. It has, however, been discovered only recently – surprisingly recently – that so-called 'private ethics', the behaviour and behavioural norms of individual people in relation to individuals, have relatively little effect on the decisive questions of ethics, those concerning justice, since private ethics do not touch on the question of the justice of the constitution as a whole. To that extent, sociology is a very old science, and the new development which has taken place since Saint-Simon and Comte is really no more than a process of emancipation whereby sociology is practised, even in its theoretical areas – as can be clearly observed in Comte – as a specialist science among other specialist sciences. Whether this has been for better or worse – or perhaps both – is a question I do not want to address at present.

Moreover, the answer to the question how far theoretical sociology is philosophy has always been precariously poised. Even the first modern social thinkers who can be called sociologists, Saint-Simon and Comte, both had the gravest reservations about philosophy, which

they called metaphysical, in keeping with the older tradition of the eighteenth century. Their rhetoric was from the first anti-philosophical, for a social reason which is curious enough to deserve mention here. These thinkers, who were thoroughgoing propagators and apologists of bourgeois society, applied for the first time to every kind of mental activity the criterion of social usefulness or, as it was probably called later, of productive work; and as critics of ideology they despised anyone who engaged in 'useless' activities. Their special whipping-boys were lawyers, whom they constantly denounced as pure parasites, and the next scapegoats after them were philosophers, the blowers of bubbles which were of no benefit to humankind. In this rejection of what is not socially useful, what does not prove of immediate worth in the life-process of society, in this outlook which might be termed practicism, the whole of modern positivism has its historical origin. It would be a very worthwhile task to trace positivism back to these specifically social origins, to the denigration of useless work as understood by a society based relentlessly on exchange. Today, of course, positivism would be more reticent about such matters than it was in the innocent days of its founding fathers, but I suspect that, at bottom, this motivation has not changed so very much.

I said earlier that, to begin with, it would be useful for you to take account of this division of sociology, however mechanical, in planning your studies. I particularly wanted to warn you against despising the individual disciplines for their practicism and concentrating exclusively on theoretical questions, as a concept of theory which sees theory as something abstractly opposed to the particular moments of society is itself problematic. However, I should say to you straight away – and amend my lecture draft in doing so – that some experiences I have had with the examination for the intermediate diploma in the last few days compel me to advise a certain caution even here. Even if you are primarily interested in the separate disciplines, the material sub-divisions of sociology – what in the current jargon are called the 'hyphen-sociologies' [*Bindestrich-Soziologien*] – you will harm your training in these disciplines if you do not also keep your eyes open to the large questions from the outset. That may have become clear to you from what I said in earlier lectures about the universal mediation of the social through society. I was once oral examiner to a young lady who had worked intensively on the problem of the 'small group'.⁴ In a job she already had, something in the nature of a 'work experience' position, she had been concerned with 'small groups' and knew a great deal about them. I then went beyond that subject and asked her about the meaning of the 'small group' in industrial society, where – as some of you may know – this has become an urgent problem

following the debate about Taylorism and the so-called 'Mayo' study.⁵ This study showed that the productivity of work is increased by the cohesion between small groups which are 'informal', that is, not organized. This revealed for the first time that, for rational reasons, irrational sectors – that is, this kind of informal relationships between groups – have become incorporated in socially rationalized work; and that our seemingly rational, but actually far from rational, society needs such irrational sectors for its self-preservation. This is an extraordinarily relevant and interesting question for theoretical sociology. After the young lady had quite admirably demonstrated her knowledge of the sociology of the 'small group', I asked her whether sociology contained anything else – over and above the sociology of the 'small group' [*Laughter*]. She then said quite literally the following: 'Yes, there are also ways of considering how social relationships might be arranged better – for example, the history of dogma.' [*Laughter*] The naivety of this formulation was extremely revealing. The young lady clearly wanted to consign all questions which go beyond practical utility to the rubbish heap of history – to the history of dogma. This did not emerge quite distinctly from what she said, but somehow lurked behind it: Yes, there are also some such dinosaurs [*Laughter*] recorded in the history of sociology, which are interested in what she thought of as a 'better arrangement of society'. She understood such improvement in a thoroughly paternalistic sense, as if the arrangements were benevolently conferred from above. It did not occur to her that sociology might have some essential connection to social struggles. In the discussion into which this examination developed I did manage with some difficulty to make her aware of connections like those to which I have just drawn your attention, that is, the function of the 'small group' as an irrational complement or counterpoint to the world of rationalized work. But I clearly did not succeed in leading her to a point where she could really understand the connections between such supposedly isolated questions. Perhaps I will be putting your minds at rest if I tell you that the young lady did pass the exam [*Laughter*]; but I think you can see rather clearly from this exchange that a concern with the so-called 'socially useful' problems of sociology, and a closing of the theoretical horizon, lead to a narrowing of perception which prevents sociology from performing the educational function which, heaven knows, it needs to perform today. If I state this to you in such general terms it probably sounds to you like a truism, and some of you may be wondering why I make so much of it. But when I reflect on my experiences as an examiner, especially in the last few days, it emerges that in reality this apparently self-evident truth is not so self-evident at all. In the unreflective preference for

isolated questions such as the 'small group', and its connections to social welfare and suchlike disciplines, one can discern a certain tendency which in its turn is connected to changes of social anthropology which have been frequently pointed out, and not only by the 'Frankfurt School'. For example, Helmut Schelsky has drawn attention to the tendency towards 'concretism',⁶ towards a certain crippling of the ability to 'elevate oneself in thought beyond that which is directly given'. People are extensively fixated, for the sake of self-preservation, on given situations, and this corresponds to what the psychoanalyst Hermann Nunberg has aptly termed 'ego weakness':⁷ the inability of people, in their over-eagerness to adapt and react promptly to particular situations, to generate a firm, permanent ego which does not vary from situation to situation. Incidentally, this 'ego weakness' is itself a fact connected to problems of identification in childhood, so that it has its roots in depth psychology, but we shall have to leave that aside for the moment. It can be said, at any rate, that in present society the ego or self has become such a burden to many people because, by thinking too consistently and vigorously, they cause themselves all kinds of inconvenience. They avoid being 'too clever by half', and find it more appropriate to reality not to develop their ego too far, in keeping with the old Berlin saying: 'You're lucky – you're stupid.' [*Laughter*] This saying has turned out to have an element of truth, and to make you aware of these issues I have said what I had to say on the relationship between these divergent areas of sociology.

I would mention by the way – and you may be quite glad if I do so today – that the questions of university reform with which you are rightly preoccupied have more to do with these issues than some of you may realize. I pointed this out at a meeting of faculty – not sociologists – recently, and was told that this was a new viewpoint. And so I do not want to conceal from you in this lecture that running through the whole matter of university reform there are two entwined themes which are not distinguished – especially in the minds of many students – although in reality they are mutually contradictory; and these two viewpoints correspond fairly closely to the dichotomy I have spoken about today. On one side there is a genuinely emancipatory movement which would like to bring about a situation where thought is not led by the nose, and to confront the universal pressures of adaptation exerted by society, and now even administered by the culture industry, with the formation of a capacity for autonomous judgement. These considerations lead beyond the merely institutional side of the university and turn into a critique of a society which, by subjecting people to ever-increasing integration – as it is called – at

the same time deprives them of the possibility of being human. I should like to say that what older people like myself find encouraging in the student movement is that it invalidates the assumption, to be found, for example, in the negative utopias of Huxley⁸ or Orwell⁹, that this integration can be smoothly imposed, that society can be so arranged that people live in hell while believing themselves to be in heaven. That assumption is proved not to work, and there is something indescribably hopeful in this. Perhaps I might tell you that twenty years ago, in my study of Huxley's *Brave New World*,¹⁰ I gave a detailed analysis of this very point – that an integration which in reality only perpetuates the antitheses is an illusion which explodes or cannot be sustained. That essay is now to be found in my book *Prisms*, which you might like to peruse. At the same time, however, alongside this tendency of university reform which is emancipatory in a broad and by no means purely academic sense, there is a second tendency, not at all clearly distinguished from it. Because the reforms revolve around reason and reasonable arrangements, this second tendency places what Horkheimer calls 'instrumental reason',¹¹ and has criticized as such, right at the centre of discussion. This approach really boils down to an attempt to turn the university into a school, a people factory, which produces the commodity of labour power in the most rational possible way and enables people to sell it at a good price. This tendency is necessarily at the expense of the movement towards autonomy which is simultaneously in your minds as an ideal for such reform. And if I may permit myself to offer some advice, without infringing your right to freedom or your right to take these decisions for yourselves, it would be that you give careful consideration to this twofold character of the issues bound up with the critique and reform of the university. I would even go so far as to say that the famous proposals of the Scientific Council,¹² however much they may be motivated by practical considerations such as the mismatch between the employment opportunities at universities and the numbers of students, ultimately fall within this second tendency of the total levelling of university standards through the production of performers of useful work. Their tendency is to promote the mechanism of adaptation which is precisely what ought to be resisted. In this you see the same dualism which I indicated to you with regard to the problem of the contradiction or divergence between the theoretical interest of sociology, on one hand, and the interests of the separate practical disciplines, on the other. I would therefore advise you, and hope you will not take it amiss, to think for yourselves very carefully about what I might call this antinomy within the student movement. For it is the case, as so often with such movements of general dissatisfaction, that you are

displeased with the university both for not being sufficiently 'streamlined', for not working well enough as a factory, while at the same time rebelling because it is too much a factory. These two moments ought to be kept apart when contributing to a critique of the university, though they should also be defined in their relation to each other. Which one do I opt for myself? I do not think I need to tell you.

Now, after this preamble, I should like to come to the real questions, the serious questions bound up with the division into 'theoretical sociology' and 'specialist sociology'. If you read these terms, or if the famous fictitious *homo sociologicus* were to come to the university and look at them, he might easily imagine that on one side there was a general area of sociological scholarship and the sociological disciplines which had to be studied, and that within this general area separate subdivisions were arranged, or even logically subordinated to it, so that, as the name suggests, 'general sociology' was the highest abstraction derived from all the individual disciplines, and represented, as it were, the final result emerging from the study of the separate subject areas. Now, this idea, which is suggested to you by the division into separate areas, is, on serious reflection, extremely problematic, and I do not believe it would be indiscreet if I told you that I myself have vigorously opposed this form of organization of sociology.¹³ However, for practical reasons, and solely for practical reasons, I have not been successful. On the other hand, as is liable to happen in such conflicts of interests, while I have bowed to the practical desiderata of a very serious kind which I have come up against, I have been unable to change in the slightest my own position in relation to this complex. That this conception of the relationship between 'theoretical' and 'specialist' sociology, or between 'general' and 'specialist' sociology, is a problematic one may well have become clear to you from what I have tried to elaborate in defining the concept of sociology. For this is not a superordinate abstract concept which sums up all social particulars. Rather – to use Hegel's expression which Marx took over from him – society is a concretely general concept;¹⁴ that means that while all particulars depend upon it, it cannot be logically abstracted from them. As the condition of its own possibility it contains within itself all the concrete particular moments which are studied by the 'specialist' sociologies according to the usual subdivision of the discipline. You may recall the requirement that the sociological method and sociology as a science should be orientated primarily not by methodological considerations but by its subject matter, society. Accordingly, 'theoretical sociology' is not an abstract universal in relation to the individual disciplines which it subtends, but examines the concrete regularities to which society is subject.

In saying this I do not wish to dispute the value of certain comparative insights – I mean comparative abstractions – in sociology. I only want to say that the exclusiveness of this comparative, abstracting procedure is untenable, simply because the dynamic laws of the capitalist world – which, finally, are the primary destiny, or non-destiny, with which we have to contend – are not a general category in relation to all the individual societies included under them, but are regularities which prevail as something unique which yet determines all particulars. Regarding the problem of comparative abstraction and what it can achieve I should like to say that it would be worth investigating what it can bring to light. For example, some time ago an American researcher¹⁵ pointed to the fact that in countless countries there was a definite divergence between south and north. While the north is governed, he claimed, by the bourgeois work ethic, is industrialized and generally richer and more puritanical, in the south people are not in such a rush, take it easier; on the other hand, conditions are in many respects more backward there, and the standard of living is generally lower. Now, when you hear this, since you already know something of Max Weber's sociology of religion,¹⁶ you will naturally think first of the difference between Protestant and Catholic regions, which to a large extent applies in the case of Germany. But the peculiar thing is that even within countries to which this distinction between Protestantism and Catholicism does not apply, Italy, for example, exactly the same social difference between south and north can be found. In Italy there is a highly industrialized north and then the *Mezzogiorno*, which, as we know, has been a constant source of unrest for the bourgeois republic of Italy, because the incorporation of the south – meaning, one might almost say, everything south of Rome, including Sicily – has not been successfully achieved. In America the relationship of the northern to the southern states is very similar, although the southern states are determined, in terms of the sociology of religion, by strict Protestant sects, Methodists and Baptists; nevertheless, this distinction applies there as well. One might think, of course, of the climate, and that will have occurred to many of you, too. But as northern Italy, the highly industrialized northern Italy, is located far further south, has a far more southern climate, than south Germany and Austria, yet still shows the northern traits, even here the situation seems odd. I do not believe a really satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon has yet been found, although I would think that such things are susceptible to explanation. I mention this partly just for its curiosity value, but also in order to show you that a comparison of different societies can yield interesting results. It is practised most extensively today by cultural anthropology, which

compares the so-called 'high civilizations' primarily with certain customs and practices of more-or-less underdeveloped peoples, and comes across some curious analogies. Sociology, of course, cannot entirely do without its relationship to ethnology and anthropology, but should not regard this relationship as its key. One certainly cannot derive a decisive structure of society from similarities between, say, certain rituals which have grown up in late civilizations, and rituals among savages. On the contrary, we have at our disposal scientific means which enable us to perceive these similarities as regression phenomena, a retrogression of so-called 'high civilizations' to earlier stages under social pressure. On the other hand, present society cannot be understood – since it is not explainable as an abstract generality – as something like an agglomerate of all possible part-sociologies or even of social sub-units. Some of you will have heard of the institution of the social atlas.¹⁷ There is one such social atlas of Hessen, in which we are shown with homely little pictures that pig-farming flourishes in one area while potatoes are more successful in another; and then there are cities like Frankfurt, which used to be trading cities but now have a strong industrial sector, and so on. If you would like to picture the state of Hessen or, more widely, the whole of Germany in sociological terms on the model of such a social atlas, that might in some respects be quite useful, as you could get a concrete idea of the distribution of the industrial and agrarian sectors, social insights which are certainly not to be despised. However, I do not think I need to explain to you in detail why such an addition of individual sectors or even of geographical regions and their social structures does not amount to a significant sociological statement, since there is in reality a functional connection between all these different areas. Society itself is not a mere juxtaposition of concrete moments, from which it emerges additively. Precisely as a 'concrete totality',¹⁸ as a concrete concept or a concrete generality, society documents itself in the relationships of dependency between these separate parts. But the most fundamental reason why such an additive approach cannot suffice is, it seems to me, that within the prevailing types of socialization, within the facts which are really decisive for present-day society, these different sectors, depicted here so peacefully side-by-side, carry entirely different weights, so that they cannot be equated in terms of their relevance to society as a whole. – Thank you.

LECTURE EIGHT

21 May 1968

I should really like to preface today's lecture by saying that I am about as much inclined to give a lecture today as you or the majority of you are to listen to one. Nevertheless, it is my duty, and I would ask you, too, to be patient, and to bear with me if I don't succeed in expressing myself as logically as I believe it my task to do. But in the present situation, when we have so much flying about our ears, I think that really is a little difficult.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you will recall – to pick up the thread once more¹ – that in my last lecture I tried to show you that sociology cannot be made up from a sum of discrete sociological findings of the kind which could be captured, for example, by a limited geographical survey. Incidentally, the type of social description which follows the example of geography is called sociography.² It is a special branch of sociology which certainly has a valid place within the discipline. You will recall that, using the model of the so-called social atlas, I tried to show you that even if you knew exactly how the population within the different regions earned its livelihood, you still would not know anything about the real social structure even of the country concerned, let alone the wider structure within which it is located. I should like now to extend that rather crude example, and would encourage you to undertake a thought experiment. I would ask you to think what would happen if the so-called 'specialist sociologies', such as political sociology, economic sociology, organizational sociology, the branch now called state sociology and suchlike disciplines, as well as social psychology, were added together. I think it must be

obvious a priori that, even by adding all these together, it could not be made clear what sociology is in its essence. What I stand for, and what I am trying to elaborate for you as the concept of sociology, is not really anything so terrible, daring and possibly speculative as the opponents of our school generally maintain. When Faust, in Part I of Goethe's dramatic poem, says that a certain kind of science lacks only a 'spiritual bond'³ holding it together, he conveys my meaning exactly. I believe, too, that this realization, that science provides a 'spiritual bond', in contrast to the mere communication of facts, was the new element which entered science about 1800 and was then completely repressed. At that time, one might say, science turned through 180 degrees. While Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* or Hegel's *Science of Logic* were being written, everything which now claims a monopoly to scientific status, especially in the social sciences, would have been relativized as a mere agglomeration of facts, without being denigrated for that reason.⁴ Today, by contrast, there is an attempt to dismiss the kind of science which aims to provide that 'spiritual bond', and which therefore conforms to the concept of science I have offered, as not merely extra-scientific but prescientific – a regression to the state which existed before the real history of science began. You can see from this how even a concept like that of science, which, as it appears at present, has a strong fascination for many of you, is subject to a historical dynamic; and how science is not simply science, once and for all, but has been understood in very different ways in different periods. You will also see, perhaps, that it takes a certain naïvety simply to hypostatize a concept of science which happens to be accepted now but was already subjected to penetrating criticism almost two hundred years ago, just for the sake of the monopoly position it holds in the present academic circus. It is my view that if the different disciplines I have mentioned to you were taken together, related to each other, some very important insights would be obtained. For example, I'd like to point to a fact which keeps on manifesting itself in a way which cannot be refuted by empirical research, yet which still lacks a truly adequate theoretical explanation. It is the fact that if one operates in, say, the area of sociology called 'social stratification',⁵ dealing with groups and strata within society, it emerges that certain ultra-reactionary, ultra-nationalist tendencies are found most strongly in a particular group, the petty bourgeoisie. They also appear in some rural, agrarian strata, but prototypically in the petty bourgeoisie. Social psychology, meanwhile, has been able to demonstrate fairly convincingly, if with some reservations, that these dispositions correspond to a very specific characterological structure. Yet no-one has been able to say with absolute certainty how the

stratification observed here, and the [resulting?]⁶ socio-psychological type, are really connected. There are, therefore [. . .] – and I would like to emphasize this very strongly – there are countless problems which are raised by the integration of the individual sociological disciplines I have listed for you. While they appear as problems from the standpoint of those disciplines, it is probably clear to you that the scientific problem in a higher sense, the truly theoretical problem, would be to bring these disparate phenomena into some fundamental relationship to each other.

Now there is in sociology a very strong tendency – which naturally finds support in the general trend towards the mathematicization of science today – which takes formalization to be a universal remedy for the disparateness and divergence of the individual disciplines of sociology, so that one would need only to develop a unified sign language for the different areas, a language capable as far as possible of being expressed mathematically, in order to arrive at something like a unity between them. After what I have explained to you, I do not think I need to demonstrate in detail why I, at any rate, do not regard formalization as such a panacea, or as the missing ‘spiritual bond’. It does not really bear on that which links phenomena together from within, but merely extracts some common element from each. What it extracts is generally very thin, and leaves you with precious little with which to explain concrete social phenomena. I certainly do not wish to deny that formalization can bring to light some interesting and important matters. But it also has a very strong tendency to lead away from a specific interest in the predominant concrete society. This fact is generally suppressed by the passion for formalization which is everywhere rampant today. One might even say that the whole quest for formalization itself depends on the increasingly formal, abstractly functional character of society, so that formalization comes to appear less as a goal or ideal than as a problem of sociology. This formalism is, of course, closely linked to instrumentalism – that is, the belief that objectivity can be guaranteed solely by elaborating the most highly polished research instruments. Such objectivity is generally paid for, however, in terms of content, retaining only a rather thin residue of the phenomena which are really of interest. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not myself responsible for the tendencies towards mathematical formalization within sociology – I must state that with all possible clarity. I cannot, therefore, go into these matters in detail here.

I shall take this as an opportunity to draw your attention to something which may characterize sociology as a whole. The fact that there is absolutely nothing between heaven and earth – or rather

on earth – which is not mediated by society⁷ implies that sociology can deal, from a social perspective, with absolutely everything which exists. This applies even to society's seeming antithesis, nature and the concept of nature. For this concept is mediated essentially by the need to control nature, and therefore by social need. This, I believe, places all the more strictly on the sociologist the demand that he should have the intellectual honesty not to believe himself qualified to pronounce on everything, just because he is a trained sociologist. If there is any justification for specialization – and I am the last to underestimate the moments of truth in it – I see that justification as lying in the fact that, precisely in sociology, specialization should recognize that no-one can be a specialist in all the subjects confronting him. Thus, for someone who has not made a special study of the sociology of developing countries, as they are now called, it is simply impossible to offer any really sensible judgement on the social problems existing there. And there is a constant temptation to assume a wise expression and pass judgement on subjects which one is unable to judge. This is generally done in the name of so-called method, which is supposed to be the universal panacea. In the course of today's lecture I shall have something more to say about the panacea of method.

Although I shall abstain, not from a sense of superiority but through lack of qualification, from discussing the modern formalization of sociology, with its mathematical tendency, I shall nevertheless show you by at least one example, as my principle requires, how the striving for formalization leads away from the specific interests of sociology. A tendency towards formalization has, of course, existed in sociology for a long time. It existed sixty or seventy years ago, in the form of the so-called 'formal sociology' of that time. While this did not operate with a mathematical apparatus, it did work with certain highly general sociological concepts, such as the concept of the 'theory of relationship' [*Beziehungslehre*]⁸ developed by Leopold von Wiese – who is still alive and taught for a long time at this university, and who regarded the study of intra-personal relationships as the specific task of sociology as such. Probably the most important and in some ways the most productive representative of this tendency in the direction of formal sociology, and the one most capable of real insight, was Georg Simmel. I should like here to draw your attention to his work *Soziologie*,⁹ if only so that you can see how many of the problems which seem topical to us today were already acute sixty or seventy years ago – for example, all the problems which we now refer to as problems of bureaucracy or of the tendency of organizations to become autonomous. In terms of content, these are undoubtedly among the

most important problems of present-day society. For the consolidation of bureaucracies is one of the most serious social problems which exist in all countries today, regardless of their social systems. These problems already appear in Simmel, even if in a highly diluted form, through being reduced to the categories of social forms and rules. They are even, if you like, central to his work. However – and this may give you some slight idea of what this formalization is really about – it appears in a form which disregards the connection between these tendencies towards bureaucratization and the unfolding historical situations, or historical tendencies, which favour, precisely, formalization. In this respect the sociology of Max Weber, which was largely guided by historical material, represents a considerable advance beyond the formal sociology of Simmel. And Weber's primary interest – I think one can say retrospectively, without risk of distorting his work – was in the problem of bureaucratization.

But I do not want to go further into that aspect of formal sociology, since the model I should like to sketch for you, which for me illustrates the weakness of that kind of formal sociology, is a quite different one. It is a model that has once again become highly topical in the latest sociological debate: the 'sociology of conflict'. It is described in a famous chapter of Simmel's *Soziologie*,¹⁰ and has been taken up again by Dahrendorf in Germany¹¹ and by Coser in America.¹² Although Coser has since modified his position somewhat,¹³ his thought, too, is founded essentially on Simmel's theory. The core of this theory – if I might for a moment strictly neglect the complexities and especially the differences between the scholars I have just named – the core of this theory is that without conflict, without an antagonism of interests, progress would not take place, social stagnation would occur, so that conflict in itself, the conflict of interests in itself, should be affirmed as an essential constituent of a vital societal life. I would mention in passing that, as so often with such theorems, we have here a kind of secularization, if one might put it in that way, of theoretical views which can be traced back to major philosophy. To an extent Kant's philosophy of history, which saw the antagonism of interests as the vehicle of progress,¹⁴ was very similar. But consider this theory more closely for a moment. It can certainly be said that in society as it is – an antagonistic, divided, class society in which the interests of groups are essentially, objectively in conflict – it will only be possible to go beyond this situation by working out the conflict to its conclusion. It is this insight, as found in theorists such as Hegel and Marx, which lends theories like the conflict theory their extraordinary plausibility. But the crucial point is that in this theory a category such as social conflict is hypostatized. It is removed from its

context, a context of quite specific, explainable and inherently resolvable antitheses and conflicts, and treated as if it were a property of society as such. It is characteristic of this theory – to apply to it an observation that Simmel himself made in a different context¹⁵ – that in it suffering, the indescribable suffering inseparable from large-scale social conflict, is completely overlooked. If you analyse this problem more deeply in the work by Simmel I have referred to, you will find that what really underlies it is the liberal model of competitive struggle. He sees social conflict as really nothing other than a competition between rival groups, just as, according to liberalism, separate individuals compete with each other in the capitalist system. According to the liberal doctrine, as we know, this is supposed to keep the whole process alive and even cause it to progress, as if it were moved by an ‘invisible hand’.¹⁶ What is entirely overlooked is that this conflict of interests, as manifested in competition, is itself a dilute derivative of much deeper conflicts: those between classes. The former conflicts are really the ones which take place after the central conflict, over control of the means of production, has already been decided, so that the competition is carried on within the sphere of an already appropriated surplus value – to use Marx’s term¹⁷ – which it does not explain. The truly central questions of conflict are therefore left untouched. For this reason the whole theory of social conflict in Simmel takes on the astonishing blandness which persists in the theory of Dahrendorf and, to a lesser extent, in the writings of Coser on the same subject. To me, the decisive thing seems to be that by isolating or, as I put it, hypostatizing conflict as a formal category of society, independently of its specific social basis and content, conflict itself – which, of course, has destructive potential, represented in foreign policy today by the threat of the total annihilation of life on earth – is made to appear, through its isolation and formalization, as something fruitful. It may be said that, in the end, the only sense in which conflict could be credited with that kind of fruitfulness would be that social conflict can lead to the abolition of conflict, and to the elimination of the antagonisms which are now growing to a point where they have an immediate potential for destruction. By contrast, the glorification of conflict implies a complete blindness to the reasonable goal of such conflict, the pacification of humankind, which Kant himself had so clearly in view in his own philosophy of history. In reality, this formal concept of conflict amounts to an apology for a bad state of affairs which is working towards its own destruction. Ladies and Gentlemen, I use this example, which is also more than an example, to awaken in you a certain mistrust of the notion of scholarly neutrality, which is constantly being nourished and engendered

by tendencies such as formalization and formal sociology. By seeming to adopt a neutral stance, by disregarding the specific content of social conflict, by not taking sides in the concrete social antagonisms, but by saying, instead, that conflict in itself is something good, quite regardless of its particular content, such a theory takes a social decision. It does so not only despite but actually by means of its apparent social neutrality. It decides in favour of the antagonistic state which gives rise to conflict, without having seriously raised the question whether a category such as conflict, seemingly founded in the nature of society and therefore eternal, could not in fact be abolished by the establishment of a total social subject, and replaced by a peace which had social and economic content, and was not a merely legal and juridical entity. The problem of such a total subject, and its implications for conflict, are not touched on in the sociology of Simmel.

Speculations of this kind – and I am thinking of one such speculation in particular¹⁸ – may well incline us to conclude that any such thing as the classless society is a priori out of the question. Considerations such as the alleged impossibility of ubiquitous and everlasting activity by human beings would contribute to such a view. But in adopting it we would be allowing a more or less anthropological theory of a supposedly invariable human nature to push aside reflection on the concrete conditions under which people live, and the question whether it is possible to change these conditions in a radical way. I am pointing out to you, therefore, that the supposed neutrality of the formalizing tendency towards value is anything but neutral, and that by appearing to be impartial it is in fact taking sides. Indeed, this seems to me to be the decisive feature of a certain kind of scientific sociology, in which the mechanism of abstraction, operating seamlessly in the Cartesian manner, supplants the concrete engagement with reality which constitutes the real interest of sociology.

I have indicated, therefore, that the question which arises from all this is of fundamental importance to sociology. It is the question whether, in view of the complexity and multiplicity of the sociological subject matter, an introduction to sociology ought to be something like an introduction to sociological methods. And if it were possible (this argument runs) to identify a generally binding method for sociology, we would be rid of the insoluble problem of the 'bad infinity' of different sociologies with their limited individual problems, and would stand on firm ground. The first thing to be said about this is, quite simply, that such faith in a unitary method for sociology is refuted not merely by the structure of its subject, which I shall not go into now as we shall have occasion enough to discuss it later; it is refuted, principally, by the simple fact that, even in its present state,

sociology does not actually have anything like a unified method. It would be a fiction to pretend that such a method existed. To claim, for example, that an analysis of institutions, that is, the kind of inquiry carried out by the so-called sociology of organizations into the consolidation of institutions or the functionality of organizations, and suchlike questions, could be performed using the same methods of investigation as are more or less adequate in describing and explaining subjective attitudes towards, let us say, a political phenomenon would be a total fiction. It is a kind of standard practice among academics – a habit I deeply mistrust and one towards which, if you will allow me, I should like to sow the seeds of mistrust in you – that whenever they are unable to understand a subject properly they fall back on talking about method. The sense of security instilled by this is, I believe, deceptive. We need to free ourselves from it entirely if we are to pursue the concept of science I spoke of to you earlier – the one concerned with the ‘spiritual bond’. One cannot really understand anything worthwhile about a method if one does not understand the matter to which it relates.

You hear so much at present about the arguments between the positivists and the Frankfurt School. In that regard I should like to say that, if you consider the problems of empirical social research – with which we of the Frankfurt School also concern ourselves very extensively – the specific difference which emerges between our practice and what is done generally is that we try not to conceive the method of sociology *in abstracto*, as something instrumentally separate from its subject matter. We constantly try – with varying success but, I should think, with the right idea – to attune the methods from the outset to the subjects to which they are applied. For example, you will have heard about research into communications and the effects of the mass media. In view of the problem of the consciousness industry, of artificially induced infantility and synthetic illiteracy, the questions addressed by this research are especially topical today.

In exploring these questions we cannot be content with simply applying the established polling techniques to the effect of the mass media. We must try to analyse the material transmitted by the mass media, and especially the form in which it reaches its recipients. From this we would try to distil relevant questions and well-founded items¹⁹ for questionnaires. We would then try to place the method from the outset in a meaningful, that is, concrete, relation to the problem itself. I believe that the very diverse and ramified studies on the culture industry produced by our circle represent a contribution in this direction. At any rate, you can see from them how an approach which separates the method from the subject matter differs from one

which seeks to evolve the method from the subject matter. It goes without saying that this would be done without setting aside or in any way disregarding the rules governing the statistical validity of findings as they relate to 'populations' of people or regions. For there are, of course, individual areas of methodology which can probably be regarded as definitive, so that they can be relied on extensively – that, at least, is the view of many sociologists. In the field of empirical social research, such areas include the whole technique of sampling – constructing representative random samples. How definitive these methods really are, and how far the whole idea of sampling presupposes a kind of blind, quasi nature-given mode of behaviour on the part of human beings, which would no longer apply once people became free agents capable of making their own decisions, is a matter I will mention to you only as a problem, without presuming to pass judgement. I can only say that, in crude empiricism, such behaviour is simply taken for granted. [...] The possibility of creating the method from the subject matter, through immersing oneself in it, naturally suspends [*aufhebt*] the principle of the separation of method and subject. In reality, method in sociology is very widely mediated by the subject, and the decisive thing is that sociology itself should become aware of this mediation. I'll give you an example of this, or at least announce it for next time, as I have set myself the task of elucidating all the fundamental ideas I set out before you here by means of concrete documentation. A very good example of the problem in question, I believe, is the dispute over the method used by the 'content analysis' of communications. You can see from this how far the choice of method, the decision on the means to be used in carrying out such content analysis – whether quantitative or qualitative or a combination of the two – really depends on the nature of the material with which one is concerned. I believe I could show you from this very tangible example that methods have to vary according to the subject, and that you could then apply this principle to the whole problem of the relationship between method and subject matter about which I have spoken.

LECTURE NINE

11 June 1968¹

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been told that the microphone has been so overtaxed by all the different 'ins'² that it has gone on strike. Microphones are allowed to as well! So please forgive me if my words lack some of their usual penetration. That is the microphone's fault at least as much as my own.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to pick up the thread at the point where we left off. – Is that more-or-less audible? I'm afraid I won't be able to keep it up for an hour if I speak louder – I hope you will forgive me. I should like to come back to the controversy over the concept of method. In the last hour which we were able to devote to a lecture, I told you that the concept of method marks the parting of the ways in sociology today. And I also tried to explain why, when introducing sociology to students, it is not enough to give an introduction to its methods. In this I find myself in disagreement with most of my sociological colleagues. It is, incidentally, a commonplace among academics, when called upon to offer an opinion on a subject they do not understand – or on a study about this subject – to say that at least they know something about its method. For my part, I always decline to do so, and I believe that is the only right course in a field like sociology, which in thematic terms forms a 'bad infinity'. A separation is always presupposed between method and subject matter, and in sociology this is not justified.

In this lecture I cannot go as deeply into the philosophical aspects of the critique of this separation as would, no doubt, be necessary. I

shall make do with pointing to a state of affairs which exists within sociology, not philosophy, and was first articulated, as far as I know, by Hans Freyer.³ It is the fact that between the object of sociology, that is, society, which consists of living human beings, and the knowing subject of sociology, that is, the people who have to know about society, there is not the same kind of objective antithesis which must be posited as given in the field of the natural sciences. In this way the ancient demand that only like can know like⁴ finds a certain justification in the subject matter. To take up a concept of Kant from the Kantian–Leibnizian controversy, it is possible in sociology to know the object from the inside⁵ in a quite different way, though not a radically different one, than is the case, for example, in atomic physics or, let's say, in the periodic system in modern element theory. The point is that the method cannot be posited as absolute in opposition to its subject matter; rather, the method of sociology must stand in a living relationship to this subject matter and must, as far as possible, be developed from it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would ask you to bear in mind that such a demand should not be interpreted unreasonably – if I might use a favourite axiom of mine. We should not take things to extremes. It is certainly necessary, before carrying out any scholarly investigation, to consider how it can be done most appropriately, to adopt a critical stance towards one's own procedures, to reflect on them and not to launch into one's research in an aimless and thoughtless way – although I should say that I know of some studies in the social sciences which were undertaken in a literally aimless way and yet yielded very worthwhile results. The empirical sociologist Lazarsfeld⁶ once said, when confronted with the task of making something out of some very unsystematic but extensive material, that provided material was available at all, one could always make something of it, provided one had the necessary imagination. And I can confirm from my own experience with the Darmstadt community study⁷ that such a study, which actually started from the hypothesis that we should simply find out everything about Darmstadt, can give rise to useful findings. Although the enterprise threatened to collapse into total irrelevance, I was able, once I had reviewed the over-abundant and partly opaque material, to extract from the subject itself a number of problem-complexes from which we derived, in a sense retrospectively, what I hope were some sensible lines of inquiry. That is inherent in the specific situation of empirical sociology in particular, and I do think we should bear this in mind when dealing with certain, so to speak, anarchical research projects, which can bring forth something quite different to what was originally intended. In the study of youth unemployment in

Darmstadt⁸ we really just wanted to collect more-or-less representative data on average young people in a city centre around 1950. This gave rise to a very sharp antithesis to the thesis of Schelsky,⁹ which he has revised in the meantime, so that the empirical material took on an intention after the event, so to speak. This may make it clear to you that the pre-eminence routinely given to method in sociology is not such a straightforward matter. Indeed, I would even say that in the interests of method itself, that is, of so-called 'fruitfulness', this pre-eminence should not be taken too literally. Despite this I would also say that in every sociological investigation one should be very clear about what one is trying to find out. The objectives of knowledge must be clearly defined and a rationale of means and ends established. One must therefore reflect on how the goals that have been set for cognition can best be reached. And of course, if one wants to avoid either rediscovering the North Pole or freezing to death in the polar ice, one must make use of the techniques already available. In the field of empirical sociology there is a whole range of techniques and methods, such as sampling, the formation of representative cross-sections, which are so highly developed that they can be considered relatively definitive and self-sufficient.

This is just to make clear to you that an element of common sense naturally plays a part in these matters. But I should like to add straight away that the decisive difference that concerns me here is that, despite the overwhelming number of highly ambitious empirical studies produced especially in America, it is not method or methodological correctness, detached from the content to which it is applied, which ought to be elevated to a god or an idol. Rather, I should say, it is the basic law of any sensible sociological inquiry today that the methods should be developed, as far as is possible, from the subject matter and its objective interest. Or at least, they should be so used that they take on emphasis from the meaning of the subject matter, rather than making themselves independent of it. To take a famous example from the methodological dispute, procedures such as scaling (a technique used to measure attitudes) should not be developed to such a point that any overlap or ambiguity is avoided, and – at least internally – absolutely reliable results are achieved, but at the expense of the things one really wants to know. Here, I should like to make you at least aware of the controversy which flared up following Guttman's critique of the conventional scaling procedure: the dispute concerning the 'Thurstone Scale' and the 'Likert Scale'.¹⁰ It is quite certain that, as a purely logical elaboration of methodology, the so-called 'Guttman Scale' is an advance over earlier forms, and is much richer. But at the same time this type of scaling entails enormous losses in terms of the

fruitfulness which was possible with scales constructed multidimensionally. To put it simply: using the good old F-Scale in the *Authoritarian Personality*,¹¹ for example, the ambiguity of certain questions really did allow us to kill more than one bird with one stone, whereas the elimination of all ambiguity from the individual items in the questionnaire, although making each item more reliable,¹² at the same time impoverishes the possible knowledge that might be gained.

I shall take this opportunity to draw your attention to a circumstance which seems to me uncommonly characteristic of the whole field of empirical sociology. I believe it would be useful for you to be aware of it from the start – for those of you who are beginners – rather than coming across it later through experience. One task of an introduction such as this, I believe, is to shorten the path leading you to certain insights – though not, of course, to remove it entirely. That would be a bad idea, as anything which you have not found out for yourselves, but have merely assimilated passively, cannot be of any great worth. The point I wish to make is that in almost all empirical-sociological questions, and perhaps in sociology generally, one almost always faces a situation in which there is a choice between several evils. I would ask you to keep this in the forefront of your minds when you yourselves have to undertake any such tasks. You have to choose between a greater and a lesser evil, and in my experience this often means choosing between fruitfulness, concreteness and abundance of knowledge, on one hand, and absolute mathematical stringency, on the other – that is to say, the verifiability and reliability, the general quantitative status, of the information you obtain. The basic problem, or aporia, confronting us in sociology is the problem of quantitative and qualitative knowledge. Quantitative knowledge is the absolutely reliable form. But just to obtain quantitatively relevant numbers, you generally have to forgo the refined, discriminating research instruments which would provide you with really productive, detailed information. Conversely, if you rely solely on the qualitative method, this may well yield the most fruitful findings; but you immediately find yourself more-or-less defencelessly facing the question whether this abundance of specific, concrete insights can actually be generalized, or whether their validity is confined to particular cases.

Naturally, sociologists have long been trying – with some success – to resolve this paradox and to bring the two methods into relationship to each other. All the same, I think I have to tell you that the resulting methods – such as backing up questionnaire-based surveys with ‘clinical interviews’¹³ – also have their problematic side. The underlying reason is that to supplement the moment of the social universal with the moment in which the social manifests itself through

the individual is actually to posit as separate two moments which in reality are inextricably intertwined, and to create an illusion that they can be added together. To give one example, my late colleague from Berkeley, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, produced a very refined method for carrying out clinical studies on the authoritarian personality. But she then attempted¹⁴ to place this in a quantitative schema. To yield to this quantifying urge is immediately to forfeit what has been gained by the qualitative analysis; the right hand takes away what the left has just won. I believe it is better to be clearly aware of such aporias at the outset, rather than stumbling on them unprepared in the course of one's concrete empirical research, and not knowing how to react in such a case. In my view, it is a part of what I might perhaps call methodological good sense to learn how to weigh up such questions very precisely. Naturally, if such reflection is to be scientific in the higher sense, one of its moments would be to realize that the so-called qualitative, seemingly individual findings encountered in the course of sociological inquiries – the attitudes, ingrained viewpoints, entrenched opinions, ideologies and suchlike that have to be investigated – are in reality not only those of individuals. To use Frau Noelle-Neumann's term, they are not confined to the 'singular sphere',¹⁵ but are socially mediated. As a result, these so-called qualitative moments always include, to an extent, the quantitative moments as well. And I should say that the choice between the two poles that I have indicated to you as a model of the aporetic character of countless empirical investigations involves a weighing-up of these two moments. Admittedly, such weighing-up would need to include the theoretical moment of reflection on the relationship of individual to society. My approach here, in contrast to prevailing sociological opinion, or rather technique, is far more radically sociological, in that I regard innumerable facts which empirical sociology attributes merely to individuals and then generalizes by including them in a statistical universe as social facts from the outset. In this way seemingly particular facts take on a far more general value than they appear to have at first sight.

I should like to take the opportunity to say a few words about the fascination with method that can be observed today, a fascination which, by the way, exists throughout the world. In America it reflects the positivistic tradition and is a self-evident part of the academic climate. In Germany it is alien to tradition, but has something of the up-to-dateness of blue jeans or Beat records about it, so that the reaction to methodology is much the same. And I would like here, if I may, to take a step beyond sociology in the narrower sense. I believe that this overvaluation of method as such, for the sake of its reliability, in isolation from any interest in specific subject matter,

can be explained by the fact that, for philosophical and social reasons, the fixed reference points, 'the transcendental loci',¹⁶ as Lukács called them in his youth, or, as they were called later, the basic ontological structures, have disintegrated. This goes hand-in-hand, of course, with a deep uncertainty in the social consciousness of each individual, which, heaven knows, does not need to be 'ontologized' and certainly does not have to be regarded as something 'existential'.¹⁷ I consider it to be a more plausible explanation of this uncertainty that in present society hardly a single individual can have the confidence to determine and reproduce his life on the basis of his own inner resources. I do not wish to offer an analysis of these phenomena of fear or uncertainty here. But I do believe that this intellectual uncertainty – or intellectual fear, if one can call it that – is so great that, provided people can only point to something absolutely certain, they lose sight of the relevance, the content, the substance of that to which this certainty refers. They make a fetish of certainty as such, at the expense of what one is certain about. This seems to me to explain the predilection for tautology, and for so-called 'logical tidiness'. People prefer to cling to pure tautology, to the absolute certainty of the proposition that $A = A$, rather than importing into the realm of knowledge the risks – of which they are preconsciously aware – imposed by an existence liable to be annihilated at any moment. In addition, of course, this partiality for methodology is linked to the prevalence of what Horkheimer has called 'instrumental reason'. In this context I would urge you to look at his book *Critique of Instrumental Reason*,¹⁸ which deals with this whole range of questions. The prevalence of 'instrumental reason' means that, for reasons set out in the book, the instruments or means of thought have become independent of the purposes of thought, have become reified. Psychologically speaking, the means and techniques, the apparatus, then take on an immense libidinal charge. There is, I would say, a continuum running from the group of kids hanging around some cars and discussing the pros and cons of the different makes with an expertise both infantile and precocious, to the obsession with methodology encountered in academic life today. In face of this I would argue that as the ideal of methodology is really tautology – as, in other words, knowledge itself is determined operationally, since it does no more than fulfill the demands of method – in face of this, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would express the suspicion – to put it modestly – that the only productive knowledge is that which goes beyond pure analytical judgement, which transcends this operational-tautological character. I do not believe there is any relevant truth, and certainly none in the realm of sociology, which is not attended by the risk that it might be wrong, that it might be wide

of the mark. And I would say that a thinking, a science, which does not expose itself to this risk is really quite empty from the outset, that it falls far short of the concept of science that was once upheld, and regresses to a mere clerical technique. I would therefore think that those students who are today trying to discover a new form for their autonomy in the reified world, and are rebelling against the reification of the world and of consciousness, ought also to direct their rebellion intellectually against the reified forms of consciousness which are imposed on them by current scholarship, especially in the social sciences.

I should like to add that the scepticism I have expressed regarding the 'only true method' is confirmed by the fact that there is profound disagreement about method even among sociologists. The most famous works of, say, the previous generation of sociologists, which are concerned with methodology – Durkheim's *The Rules of Sociological Method*¹⁹ and Max Weber's writings on the theory of science²⁰ – contradict each other on the decisive points. To sum these points up briefly: Max Weber introduced the concept of an 'interpretative sociology', believing fundamentally that sociological knowledge consists in understanding the 'means–end rationality', the assessment of opportunities made by social agents;²¹ whereas Durkheim took the view that sociology differed essentially from psychology (although Max Weber, too, distinguished sharply between them²²) in that real social facts – *faits sociaux* – cannot be understood, are impenetrable and opaque and ought, as he put it without himself quite realizing the implications of what he said, to be treated as 'things', as *choses*; thus, Durkheim's sociology was also called *chosisme*.²³ Traces of this view still survive in French structuralism, to which, incidentally, I shall devote one of the next advanced seminars in sociology, as I think it appropriate that German sociologists should have first-hand knowledge of these matters. The second difference is that Max Weber, as you know, rigorously upheld the view that sociology was 'value-free'²⁴ – meaning that value judgements must be absolutely excluded from it. And I should like to say that the vulgar positivism of today has followed him precisely in this, whereas he himself, being still trained in idealist epistemology, refused to have any truck with vulgar sociologism. Durkheim, by contrast, although in some ways a far more unrepentant positivist than Weber, admitted value judgements to sociology. He did so, I believe, because of his more penetrating perception and analysis of the facts themselves. For he had realized that the mere distinction between true and false introduces a value relationship even into pure acts of cognition, which Weber – naïvely, I would say – thought he could separate from axiological acts, or acts which

involve valuations. And indeed, if you read one of Durkheim's early major works such as *The Division of Labour in Society*,²⁵ the evaluative timbre is unmistakable. It is very closely related to what I mentioned earlier, the hypostasis of social facts which, in a process which became more and more prominent in his work, were used normatively and acknowledged as determining values. These two moments, the impenetrable givenness of *faits sociaux* and their aspect of value, later crystallized out with utmost sharpness in Durkheim's theory of *conscience* (consciousness) and of the *esprit collectif* (collective mind).²⁶

Now, I only bring these matters to your attention to show that there is no unanimity on the central questions of sociology even among thinkers for whom reflection on method played as central a part as it did for the greatest French and German sociologists of the last generation. Perhaps I might add, off the cuff, that I do not wish to oppose an evaluative approach to Weber's value-free standpoint, as is often asserted. It is no less impossible to relate sociological knowledge to fixed values adduced from outside, and thereby already reified, than it is to conceive an absolutely value-free sociology of the kind postulated by Weber. Max Scheler attempted the former in his middle period, and even in his late 'sociology of knowledge'.²⁷ I myself believe, to adapt a dictum of Feuerbach's,²⁸ that one should not be against either value freedom or values, but above both. That is to say that the whole choice between them must itself be regarded as an expression of a reification of a kind which was still inconceivable in Kant, for example, who distinguished between the worth, in the sense of the rank or dignity [*Würde*], of an object or piece of behaviour, and its price.²⁹ Not by accident does the term 'value' call to mind economics and the market, and it was from there – via a detour through Münsterberg, Windelband and Rickert³⁰ – that it found its way into the social sciences. It is itself an expression of reification, just as the opposed position of absolute value freedom also expresses a reified consciousness.

However, I touch on this now only to prevent you from leaving this lecture with the idea that I want to fall back on the dogmatic hypostasis of some kind of general anthropological values. I am no more inclined to do that than to adopt Weber's position. Rather, Kant's statement that 'only the critical path is still open'³¹ seems to me highly topical, especially with regard to the so-called 'problem of value'. It is curious that this whole problematic has not yet been investigated as radically as it should have been, either in the sociological or in the philosophical literature. And yet everyone agrees – I think it can be said – that the old rigid dichotomy of evaluative and value-free knowledge is no longer tenable today.

If I have referred to the disagreement among sociologists of the last generation with regard to method, I think that something similar can be discerned in the present generation. Those of you who attended the Frankfurt conference of sociologists and heard what my colleagues Dahrendorf and Scheuch,³² who are both opponents of a dialectical conception of society, had to say will not have failed to notice the deep-seated differences between them, although Scheuch adopted the far more radically positivistic standpoint of the two. It is, moreover, a regular feature among sociologists that each of them calls his predecessor a metaphysician. I would just like to draw your attention to this fact and avoid theorizing about it at length. At any rate, the objections that Comte raised so emphatically against the metaphysicians, and probably against his teacher Saint-Simon, a far bolder and more energetic thinker, reappear almost unchanged in Durkheim's³³ critique of the concept of progress in Comte. For an American methodologist of sociology such as Lundberg,³⁴ Durkheim himself, with his absolute and seemingly autonomous collective consciousness, was an ersatz metaphysician.

Clearly, the attempt to abolish concepts in sociology and – if I may put it in extreme form – to reduce them to mere tokens, abbreviations for the facts they subsume, devoid of any autonomy, seems to me extremely narrow-minded. There is simply no thought without concepts. This fact, in conjunction with the inherent tendency of recent sociology to do away with the autonomous concept, exposes sociology once again, through the ineffable, ineradicable quality of any concept occurring within it, to the suspicion of metaphysics. One might conclude that, regardless of what positivism chooses to call metaphysics, it is impossible to deny, simply in view of the immanent meaning of social knowledge, that the demand to eliminate concepts contains a chimerical and, one might almost say, a quixotic element.

I should like to remind you again that the possibility of sociological knowledge, and especially knowledge not already regulated, which I have called 'unregimented experience',³⁵ is curtailed to an extraordinary degree by the absolute primacy of method. I would also say that I believe this narrowing by a methodology posited as absolute, a fetishized methodology, is almost always at the expense of the subject matter. This is the central perspective from which I should like you to read about the controversy between Habermas and Albert,³⁶ which dealt with these questions. I shall not refer to it in detail in this lecture as we would like to do so in the seminar directly afterwards, which, I am delighted to say, Herr Habermas plans to attend. [Applause] – I tell you this merely to give you an idea of the meaning this controversy has from the standpoint of sociology. [Applause]

LECTURE TEN

18 June 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please excuse me for being late. Like many of you, I expect, I have been vainly waiting outside for the bell. Once again, all sorts of things don't seem to be working. I also have the impression that something is not quite right with the loudspeaker or with the air-conditioning – but otherwise everything's working perfectly.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have begun to concern ourselves with the question of the relationship between method and subject matter. I pointed out to you that the belief in the method which is especially widespread in recent sociology and claims to be the only true method is refuted by the fact that, in the most diverse periods, sociologists have never really been able to agree about method. May I ask why you are hissing? – Well, that's strange – Herr Kulenkampff has told me that the technical people have been notified and have assured him that everything's in order. I can only pass that on. I must ask you to excuse me: I simply cannot speak more loudly than at present. I'm very sorry, but I hope my voice will carry to some extent.

By pointing out this divergence of methods, which may really be especially characteristic of sociology, I do not wish to minimize the relevance of controversies over method. It is generally the case that real problems are concealed behind these disputes. And that is really the reason why I am, to some extent, following the usual technique of introductions which, since they cannot immerse themselves in the

subject matter, concentrate on the debate about method. I would ask you to bear in mind – and I say this so that you do not interpret the critical remarks I have made as mere undisciplined ‘sociologizing’ – that, naturally, real matters of substance are always also manifested in the methodological problems posed by sociology. That is to say that it is always a feature of problems of method that both the validity and the content of sociological knowledge depend, to some extent, on method and the choice of method. The problems of substance, mediated by the problems of method, naturally always emerge as well. And the critical remarks I have made about the revision of methodology are intended not – I must underline this – to inhibit reflection on method, but rather to prevent you from taking the seemingly minimal but in fact momentous step which consists in believing that all the decisive questions of substance can be reduced to questions of method. It is rather the case that not only are divergences of substance concealed in methodological controversies – just as it is usual in the sciences for formal or methodological disputes to be just a front for disagreements about content – but the seemingly decisive methodological differences sometimes contain aspects, antinomian aspects, of the matter itself.

I consider this point so important that, true to my principle of demonstrating general considerations wherever possible by models which are themselves sociologically relevant, I shall come back to the dispute between Durkheim and Max Weber – a dispute which, incidentally, was not fought out openly – that I touched on in the lecture before last.¹ In it you can see the relationship between method and substance very clearly. It is the case that Durkheim, in asserting the non-intelligible in *chosisme*, and thereby stating that sociology really finds its true subject where comprehensibility ceases, hit on a very central moment of socialization: that something originally made by human beings becomes institutionally autonomous in relation to human beings. Only he hypostatizes this point; that is to say, he treats it as if such opacity were ‘second nature’ to the institutions, were inherent in socialization itself. And this tendency is at the origin of the apologia for the existing society which is a decisive trait of Durkheim, and one which became more pronounced in the course of his development. But even in this tendency – and it is a purpose of an introductory course to encourage you to read sociological texts on a deeper level, Ladies and Gentlemen – even in this tendency there is a moment of truth. For although what we call reification and what we call alienation – two concepts, incidentally, which are far from identical – undoubtedly arose from capitalist society in the specific form in which we have known them since Hegel and Marx, it would

be a quite unseemly romanticization of the original forms of society to suppose that earlier societies really embodied something like a 'pure immediacy between people. Whether there ever were 'peaceable savages',² inoffensive, unorganized small societies – one can argue about that at length. As far as I know, the same thing happens here as in most other cases when questions about the origins of such phenomena are addressed to ethnology: it refuses to give an unequivocal answer. And that may not even be the fault of ethnology, since such phenomena may indeed be lost in the uncertainty of primeval times. But what can be said with certainty is that the earlier stages of society which the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen entitled 'barbarian culture',³ such as the Mexican or Egyptian cultures, have in their own way a character no less compulsive, and that they eluded 'understanding' by a labour slave or a victim of ritual sacrifice, for example, just as the operations of industrial society elude such direct understanding today.

Weber, by contrast – if I may now move on to his position, without referring to the conditions he is addressing – argues that these congealed relationships, which have become autonomous, objectified *vis-à-vis* human beings, are also, as Marx expressed it, 'relationships between human beings and not, as they appear to us, the properties of things'.⁴ In doing so Weber makes plain where the interest of sociology lies – and there is a moment of truth even in sociological subjectivism. For unintentionally, implicitly, he has managed to reduce institutions to something human by demanding that everything social must be capable of being understood. In this he has very logically made use of the medium which the subjects and the objectified, reified institutions actually have in common: rationality.

I have referred in a very brief and concentrated way to a methodological dispute within earlier positivist sociology – and I repeat that both the German and the French schools were equally positivist, equally opposed to idealist speculation and the idea of understanding their subject matter 'from the inside'. This may have given you some idea – and I attach great importance to this – of why we see ourselves as compelled to make the transition to a dialectical conception of society. And perhaps you can also see how little this transition has to do with the occult science operating with special concepts propelling themselves portentously inside our heads, as which the dialectic is constantly parodied in a malicious misunderstanding of Hegel. For the task of a dialectical theory would be to bring together these two clearly opposed characteristics of society, its unintelligible opacity, on the one hand, and its reducibility to the human and thus its intelligible character, on the other. It would do so by deriving both

moments from a common element, the life process of society, which in its early stages demanded just as much autonomy, petrification, even domination – that, at least, was the view of the great socialist theoreticians – as is generated by the social work of the total society. Society thus becomes understandable once more, as the opposite of such institutionalization. I believe that what I have said must be enough to indicate that the dialectical viewpoint can manage without witchcraft or a false bottom, and that it simply represents a more logical way of thinking. And I would say that the real sin of positivism is to cut off this logic of thought, this advance of a theory driven by its own inner necessity, in favour of a naïve and stubborn adherence to immediate facts. Such an approach is quite alien to the natural sciences, which are far more advanced in this respect, and are constantly forced to develop theories of the very kind which the positivists forbid dialectical sociologists. That is the point I wanted to make you aware of in connection with the dispute over methodology.

I should like to add that the choice of method is not fortuitous or arbitrary. This means that it does not necessarily lead to an identical core. You will say – and it's a plausible argument – that precisely when one starts from an objective structure of society, as I have emphatically advocated in this lecture, instead of from mere subjective schemata, all roads lead to Rome – that is, all methods ought really to converge in the same factual situation. I'm sure there is some truth in that. Certain basic structures of society do manifest themselves in the most diverse methods. If, for example, you consider the qualities Max Weber attributed, very much in the manner of subjective sociology, to the 'ideal type' of capitalism,⁵ and compare them with the Marxian theory against which Weber's sociology was largely conceived, you will find a large number of moments in common: for example, the equivalent form, the market, rationality, calculation and suchlike concepts. Admittedly, in Weber these moments might almost be called attributes, whereas in Marx they are not attributes but are evolved from a basic category, that of the commodity form.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, at this point I think we should not forget that the science of society has to do with an infinitely complex object, even if this object does not always confront us in any such complex form. Sometimes it does so with the brutality of which the recent events in France have provided further horrifying samples, with the intervention of the Gaullist police.⁶ The fact is that the decisive thing – and this seems crucial to me – is not the seemingly identical core, which remains the same in the different methodological approaches. What really matter are the configurations in which these moments appear – and they are largely theoretical moments. Despite

the agreement between certain elements of Weber's theory of capitalism as an ideal type, and Marx's theory directed not at ideal types but at the substance itself, what makes the entire difference, I would say, is whether these moments are listed and summarized in a kind of definition, by an interpreting, analytical, descriptive sociology in the older positivist style – of the kind to be found in Wilhelm Dilthey's *Wissenschaftslehre*,⁷ for example – or whether they are developed, in the way I indicated earlier, from certain basic categories; and whether they give rise to what Marx himself, in the famous letter of his youth, called the 'grotesque, precipitous melody' of Hegel's thought,⁸ that awesome and overwhelming phenomenon of a compelling coherence between the so-called attributes, which are not simply orientated towards a conceptual core, but are each derived from the other. And the hellish, compulsive character of the whole from which we all suffer is demonstrated in such thought in a quite different way than in the descriptive, interpretative kind of sociology to be found in Weber. You may see from this that even when the different methodological approaches yield the same thing, that thing is not the same after all, but carries an entirely different weight.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like now to come to another point, which I have not mentioned so far. For I have always said that the method should be governed by the substance, and should not be a mere classificatory schema. I could imagine that some of you – those, for example, who come from the natural sciences or at least have a scientific model of objectively valid knowledge – may demand, with justified scepticism, that I give you a model to illustrate the difference between a knowledge which is governed by its substance and another which is not. You may want me to make clear how this is to be pictured in concrete terms; and I should like to give you such a model. I shall take it from the field of the theory or critique of ideology. Now if, for a moment, we acquiesce to the concept of sociology based on a division of labour, and if, therefore, we believe that sociology can be severed from the underlying social processes of the economic production and reproduction of life, then this question of ideology almost automatically becomes the central problem of sociology as a whole. You know that one of the techniques of research into or critique of ideology – whether one or the other I shall leave aside for a moment – concerns itself with certain products of the mind, analysing them and drawing social conclusions from these products. One might say, of course, that the critique of ideology ought to concern itself simply with people, who – to use the special terminology of sociology – are the bearers of ideas or ideologies. But the briefest reflection will show you that ideologies, though immediate to the people

themselves, do not have their social origin simply in these people and the consensus between them. They either come to them collectively, through tradition or other means, or – and this is characteristic of our present society – they are actually first produced by the highly concentrated and organized structure of opinion-formation, through the culture industry in the very widest sense. Because, therefore, on one hand, one cannot become aware of the ideologies of people merely by the technique of questioning them; and because, on the other, one must take into account that the ideologies themselves are largely functions of the influence exerted on them by supposed or real mental structures, researchers have turned increasingly to the study of these mental structures from a social standpoint.

Before I start talking about the problem by which I want to elucidate the relationship of method to substance, I should like to point to what is probably the characteristic difference between a sociology orientated towards the objective structure and one guided merely by method. It is that the former is not concerned, as I have already indicated, only with the reactions of test subjects, as the usual rules of positivism require. Because the behaviour being investigated, to the extent that it is ideological, itself has a sense or a senselessness which in turn is connected to the sense and senselessness of society, it sets up a relationship between what behaviourist theory calls the stimulus and the response. This means that the supposedly subjective reactions of subjects to questions stand in a relationship to an analysis of the stimuli which society administers to its members. One of the most short-sighted aspects of the prevalent positivist sociology – and one which repeatedly involved me in conflicts in America – is that the assumption of such a meaning, or openness to research, or interpretability, of what impinges on individual people is placed under a kind of taboo. It is believed that the only thing that can be grasped with certainty are reactions, while it is completely forgotten that these reactions, being something mediated, derivative and secondary, do not have anything like the certainty ascribed to them. Here again, Ladies and Gentlemen, you can see that the reason for the concern with the relationship between the content of social stimuli and social reactions, which is cultivated in a very systematic way at the Institut für Sozialforschung, is neither a whim nor a kind of philosophical speculation. It is the outcome of reflections which are readily open to any unprejudiced person. And – as it is my habit to put my cards on the table for you and to scorn so-called proper pedagogical behaviour – I should like to tell you that my particular concern in this lecture is that you should be able to take the step from simple social experience and simple social material to the position which is called *tant bien*

que mal, that of the 'Frankfurt School', and that you can take this step in a rational way, and not through any suggestion, however veiled.

Perhaps I have now convinced you to some extent that the analysis of texts is of relevance to sociology. Naturally, they do not need to be texts, they may also be images; and I hope I have shown you that this method can also be usefully applied to music. But the fact that language as a means of communication is in general common to such products and to the people to whom they are addressed places the texts in a somewhat preferential position. Such analyses of texts have been carried out from an early stage. They go back to the 1920s. Benjamin did a number of such things at that time; Kracauer applied this approach very systematically, as did Bloch; and I think I may say that there are quite a number of studies by me, done with the same intention, dating from that time.

In America – quite independently of these efforts in Germany, which were carried on entirely outside the universities and were strongly resisted by academic sociology – this problem was also addressed, but from a primarily academic standpoint. The man who has the merit of having been the first in America to concern himself systematically with these matters is Harold Lasswell,⁹ an ideology researcher who – and this is characteristic of his treatment of the subject – has been strongly influenced by Vilfredo Pareto,¹⁰ whom he holds in extraordinarily high regard and to whom he owes the concept of 'total ideology'. He therefore gives less weight to the critique of ideologies, since, for people of this persuasion, there is really no such thing as a non-ideological entity. Lasswell would not have been an American thinker of the 1930s if he had not developed this kind of analysis, which he called 'content analysis', as an essentially quantitative method. 'Content' for him means far more than the term suggests, referring to the analysis of any texts or other intellectual structures. Today this would mean analyses of illustrated magazines, certain films – all possible things of that kind. In applying his quantitative method he first identified a certain number of factors or motifs – or whatever you'd like to call them – used in the texts he studied, and then tried to count these motifs, from which such a text is composed. His aim was to determine the weight carried by each of the individual motifs, or, in the case of propaganda,¹¹ of the devices or events used, in the context of the political platform on behalf of which the technique was applied. He gave a very penetrating account of this quantitative procedure in an essay which has become famous: 'Why Be Quantitative?'¹² A few years before his death the German sociologist Siegfried Kracauer replied to him in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, in which Lasswell's

work probably also appeared, with a very interesting and courageous essay on the importance of qualitative procedure in content analysis.¹³ Bearing in mind the import these methodological disputes have on issues of substance, I would strongly recommend you to study these two texts in detail.

It is my opinion that in this controversy – and this may remind you, in a very different context, of what I had to say about the seemingly far broader and more fundamental, and less technical, dispute between Max Weber and Durkheim – both sides unquestionably stand in a certain relationship to the content of the communication concerned. The justification or otherwise of each procedure, Lasswell's quantitative one or the qualitative procedure I used in the television analyses in *Eingriffe*,¹⁴ for example, or in the 'astrology' study in vol. 2 of *Sociologica*,¹⁵ cannot, therefore, be decided in some abstract methodological way, by saying that one is right once and for all and the other wrong; they both stand in relation to the object to be analysed. Incidentally, Lasswell's method, though purely or essentially quantitative, does assume certain qualitative moments in that the various categories enumerated in such a text are initially qualitative in nature. One cannot quantify anything which one has not first, in a certain sense, determined qualitatively. I believe that this is a basic principle of the whole problem of sociological method of which you are trying to form a picture.

Lasswell's quantitative method is entirely appropriate to the system – let me call it bluntly by that name – to the system of advertising, which I understand in a broad enough sense to include the type of the magazine novel or the type of the commercial film or the type of most light music. That is to say that such material, which is organized from the outset to capture customers and is generally called 'communication' today, actually contains, in a planned, administrative way, all the operations capable of achieving the optimum effect, the individual techniques and devices being weighed against each other in terms of this criterion. This gives rise to something like an *adaequatio rei atque cogitationis*, meaning that in all such cases – for this applies to everything produced by the culture industry – quantitative analysis is ready-made for material already organized in terms of quantitative categories. However, such analysis requires us to identify the overall intention of such a communication. For in these structures – even the most arid and wretched of them – all the tricks used can only be evaluated by seeing them in relation to the overall goal being pursued, and to this extent a qualitative moment necessarily enters the analysis. On the other hand, the more complex and, above all, the more autonomous mental structures are, the more meaningless such a

quantitative analysis, in terms of the frequency of the devices used in them, becomes. Now, please do not say that such complex structures have in principle nothing to do with ideology, for even highly organized mental structures can have an entirely ideological context and exert strongly ideological effects. They often have an inherently ideological point, if I may put it like that. But such enumeration would clearly be futile when applied to such works. What is necessary here is that one should grasp the social content of the work through an analysis which immerses itself in the specifics of the material. By presenting this content as concretely as possible, one can assess its possible effect on others. That, incidentally, is at the heart of the controversy on the sociology of music which has been going on for far too long between Herr Silbermann and myself in various publications.¹⁶ That is really the point at issue; and it is surprising that so little attention has been given to the rather obvious fact that the content of highly organized and complex structures can only be grasped by analysing their meaning, instead of defining them from the outset in terms of an effect which possibly is quite alien to them. What needs to be extracted and is of sociological relevance, therefore, is the content. And this will only be discovered by an analysis of the work's immanent structure, although that analysis can then be supplemented by surveys of the effects of the work. It must be said, however, that the conversion of the specific concrete insights gained from the structure itself into empirical sociological questions brings with it a whole mass of difficulties which anyone who has not rolled up their sleeves to do empirical work in sociology would find it hard to imagine. I shall continue from this point on Thursday.

LECTURE ELEVEN

20 June 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have just been told that the air-conditioning is not working again. It's doubtful whether the loudspeaker is working. One of the two lifts has been out of action for many weeks. I find this situation scandalous. [*Applause*] If lecture theatres are designed and built to accommodate a large number of listeners, and might even be visited by such numbers, then the least one can expect is that the technical facilities will be on a corresponding scale. I have asked the faculty of the Philosophy Department to raise this matter forcefully with building management. If the students could also do something energetic in the same direction I think that might be very helpful.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I tried in the last lecture to demonstrate with reference to a concrete model how questions of method depend concretely on the question of content. The model I used was the famous, and for sociology highly relevant, problem of the relationship between quantitative and qualitative methods, and I took an example from a special area of sociology with which I myself am closely concerned, so-called 'content analysis'. I should just like to add now, Ladies and Gentlemen, that in this method too, of course, a mechanical quantification, or any restriction to a quantitative method, is not enough. In order to be able to classify the material into so-called 'factors' the first necessity is to ascertain the idea or intention or, to put it less respectfully, the ticket – in the case of the mechanically produced culture industry. Only then can the functions of the individual devices and techniques used in the mental structure be recognized. From this

you may see something which seems to me decisive for the whole of empirical sociology. For if we believe it necessary, for the sake of the alleged impartiality and purity of empirical investigations, to approach the problems from the outset without any prior concepts, it generally emerges that we have no criterion for selecting that which we are to investigate. Such purely empirical, such exaggeratedly empirical, studies therefore generally founder simply on insufficiently differentiated material. If I might mention a few rules of thumb relating to these questions of empirical sociology, one such rule – and I emphasize that this is a general rule which has its exceptions – is that no more will come out of an empirical study in terms of results than has been put into it in terms of ideas. Naturally, that needs to be heavily qualified. The ideas can be falsified by the study, and the better the study is designed to decide between specific alternatives, the better the chance of being able to falsify the hypothesis, or whatever you like to call it, on which the study is based. However, there is a difference between putting in something which can be falsified or differentiated in this way, and not doing so. I should almost like to say that the possibility of falsification, to which a positivist theoretician of science and sociologist such as Popper¹ attaches such extraordinary importance, is in its turn a function of the ideas you have put into the study. Falsifiability is itself a function of the theory invested, and this possibility of falsifiability as a criterion of truth, by which present-day positivism sets such store, is not available to an a-theoretical approach unless the study concerned contains ideas which can themselves be falsified. Incidentally, I should also like to draw your attention to a problem connected to the countability of content analysis and to classification by factors in general. Or rather, I'd really like to draw your attention to two problems connected with the logic of science, the importance of which was made clear to me by an empirical study² I am concerned with at present, which is very large and very productive in many directions. First of all, if you are not analysing texts but ideologies, syndromes – such as the syndrome of the highly prejudiced personality, as studied in the *Authoritarian Personality*³ – it is necessary to be aware that the so-called 'factors' or 'sub-syndromes', as they are so elegantly called, or 'sub-scales', as they are commonly termed in the context of modern scaling techniques, are themselves a product of abstraction. In reality, because everything is related to a total structure, a whole which cannot be apprehended directly, but only through such an analysis, these sub-scales or sub-syndromes are interconnected by meaning. Empirical investigations show us this over and over again, even in their process of quantification. The danger with empirical studies, to which I would alert all those of you who work empirically

– and I hope that all of you, if you are studying sociology, are involved in one way or another in empirical studies, since these are the best apprenticeship in such matters, and practice, as we know, makes perfect – I would alert you to the danger that in the course of being processed and evaluated these substructures are almost unavoidably reified. That is to say that, although they are the product of abstraction, they are treated as if they were actually moments, factors – this is why people talk of ‘factor analysis’ in the context of social research – factors of which the total structures to be studied are composed. In other words, a piece of subject matter is built up additively from these alleged factors which have themselves only been introduced into a piece of pre-structured material by the method used. This reification can give rise to a somewhat mechanical mode of understanding, and to spurious problems, such as the question whether this or that factor is preponderant, whereas such problems concerning the position of one factor or another should be resolved or extrapolated from the total context, which has only been retrospectively dissected into these so-called ‘factors’. The other problem, very closely connected with this, is that, especially in fruitful studies of the empirical type, the individual items, as they are called, of which research instruments are apt to be composed, are always multidimensional or, to put it more simply and perhaps more clearly: they kill several birds with one stone. This happens, especially when the study is based on a really fruitful analysis of the whole, for the reason I have explained, which is that, in reality, underlying total structures are always present which are dissected into partial structures only for operational reasons, so that they can be apprehended by the empirical method.

If you take the trouble to look quite closely at the *Authoritarian Personality* in this connection, you will find that very many of the items in the residual, shortened questionnaire belong to a series of these sub-syndromes and that they represent different factors, although any attempt to reduce them to one factor each or to weight the factors could have only limited success. Consequently, ascetic purists of the positivist persuasion have declared their opposition to the so-called ‘Likert Scale’, which tends to evaluate such polyvalent or multi-dimensional items. I shall not discuss this scale in detail here, as it is dealt with in the lectures or seminars on empirical techniques.⁴ These purists have criticized its ambiguity and tried to set up one-dimensional instruments in which each item belongs to only one syndrome, so that they can all be related together in only one dimension, and all ambiguity is avoided. But precisely this has given rise to an extraordinary impoverishment of the instrument in terms of its fruitfulness.⁵ This illustrates the general point I have been trying to make

clear to you, that the productivity of an investigation does not stand in a simple or positive relation to the exactness of the research means used. The relation between them is extremely complex, can even be such that one exists at the expense of the other.

I would again ask you not to misunderstand me. I do not mean that one should construct research instruments in some uncontrolled fashion without considering the logical dimensions and values of the individual items of the instrument, which are sometimes very complex. But I would say that these considerations should be made very carefully, and should take account of the relevance of the information which is to be obtained from items, or the relationship between items, which subserve only the one-dimensional clarity and measurability of the instruments concerned. I do not wish to encourage you to produce improvised research instruments which, in any case, would soon be invalidated operationally by the wild inaccuracy of the results produced. I would only warn you not always to give preference to considerations of the logical purity of the instruments, rather than to the productivity of the means used. For example, items in which a large number of dimensions converge often prove especially productive, because they are relatively untouched by the process of instrumental abstraction, and may therefore come especially close to the intrinsic structure of the subject matter, which is the real object of the investigation.

To return to the subject of content analysis – which I am using to gain access to a far more fundamental aspect of sociological research – what is most important is that when engaging in this kind of study one should be clear about the ultimate purpose of the whole investigation – one should raise the question of *cui bono* – whose interests does it serve? This is especially the case when applying the counting method to the mass media and such matters, where it is productive. And as I tried to explain last time, quantitative content analysis cannot be applied to autonomous mental structures.

I am touching here on a state of affairs which is of decisive importance to social theory as a whole and indeed, I would almost say, to a reading of any scholarly work. If I may give you a piece of advice – and perhaps it is not inappropriate in an introductory lecture to advise my listeners in their capacity as students – then the first piece of advice I have to give would be that you should always read the books you study from the point of view of their specific aim. For example, if one approaches philosophy from a naïve standpoint and has never been told what is the intention behind such a text, what the whole thing is aiming at, one is fairly helpless. And I believe that one of the foremost requirements of university study – which, in the end,

must be essentially a study of the person studying – is to pass on information of this kind. To take an example from my own memories, if I imagine reading Spinoza's *Ethics* without knowing that his aim was to deal with a problem which had been of burning interest to all philosophers throughout the seventeenth century, including Leibniz and the Occasionists, namely that of reconciling the mental, spiritual world or substance with the spatial, physical one, of healing the breach between 'outside' and 'inside' that had opened with the disintegration of the medieval world order – if one did not know that Spinoza was trying critically to close this breach – which had first been formulated, with magnificent bluntness, in Descartes's doctrine of twofold substance – by means of a theory of divine substance, which gave rise to the whole of Spinoza's so-called 'pantheism' – then the definitions and axioms in Spinoza's *Ethics* would have been from the outset a book not only closed but sealed with seven seals.

Now, this consideration applies to sociological texts to an especially high degree. Gottfried Salomon-Delattour, who died some years ago and was one of the first to teach sociology at this university,⁶ always told us in his seminars that whenever we read a sociological text we should pose the question of *cui bono*, in order to be clear about the relationship between the texts to be read and real social interests. This should not necessarily be understood as a piece of crude ideological theory asserting that every text you read is ideology, a mere expression of interests. But – to give you another example from the history of dogmatic theology in the seventeenth century – you will undoubtedly get a very different idea of the pessimistic and authoritarian materialism of Thomas Hobbes if you know that this was a theory serving the restoration of the monarchy and attempting to defend absolutism against emergent democratic potentials, than if you see Hobbes simply, let's say, in the context of a general history of materialism, in relation to the materialist philosophers of antiquity. This question of *cui bono*, of asking simply about the connection between mental structures with social content and the real social situation, will prevent you from lapsing into mere intellectual history when you are studying the history of dogmatic theology. For it has been a peculiarity of social reflections since Plato and Aristotle that they do not form part of a merely intellectual or theoretical continuum, and that extremely real social conflicts and situations are also delineated in them.

It is probably characteristic of all mental entities, all objectified intellectual structures – if I may insert this somewhat more general reflection here – that they have a kind of dual nature. On one hand, they have a certain kind of immanent logic, of immanent truth, which

is explained finally by the fact that the mental functions of the human species have taken on an independent existence in the course of its natural historical development, and have thus acquired a kind of autonomous regularity. On the other hand, however, intellectual structures as such, in which an individual subject is never actually at work, but always a social subject, are always also *faits sociaux*, social facts, behind which stands society, either the whole social structure or the whole structure mediated through special group interests, and which in turn react on groups or on society as a whole. And it is therefore necessary to apply this twofold reflection to probably all mental structures. Incidentally, a reference to this twofold character of mental structures is also a defence against the facile charge of sociologism, which accuses sociology of seeing only the social aspect of mental structures, although their autonomy is no less intrinsic to them. Admittedly, this autonomy must itself be understandable finally in social terms; that is to say, that the autonomy of the mind, and the necessity of that autonomy, follow in their turn from the division of labour and ultimately from the demands that the need for survival has placed on the human species.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in this lecture I have mentioned in passing some examples from the history of dogmatic theology, thereby smuggling the concept of the history of dogma into the discussion by sleight of hand. Now, as I've little talent as a smuggler I do not want to let the matter rest there, but will take the opportunity to say something about the importance of the so-called 'history of dogma' in sociology. This is necessary for two reasons. Firstly, there are very strong tendencies to relegate the history of dogma, that is, the concern with sociological texts from the past, to the sphere of intellectual history, and to the status of what must be called a mere auxiliary branch of sociology. As an example of this, the very important American sociologist Robert Lynd, who created the genre of the 'community study' and to whom we owe the outstanding works of social criticism *Middletown* and *Middletown in Transition*,⁷ once said in my presence in New York that on principle he never read any books written before 1912 – I don't know why he drew the dividing line exactly there. Now Robert Lynd is anything but an obscurantist; on the contrary, he is a highly educated, progressive and enlightened man. What made him say what he did was a repugnance for the historicism, especially of the German type, which seeks to circumvent current problems by delving into the history of this or that phenomenon. Incidentally, this kind of thinking is also to be found in Germany. A very famous and important economist⁸ in Germany told me not long ago that what is called 'political economy', which I was advocating

as indispensable for the study of economic theory, was really only a part of the history of dogma. In face of this hostility towards history, one has to reflect on the reasons why one does, after all, concern oneself with matters connected with the history of dogma. And I believe that this has nothing to do with generalist education or similar dubious categories, but that the study of texts from the past, which do not apply directly to present-day society and, in some of their conceptions, may really lag behind the current state of an economy and a society which have been socialized to an immeasurable degree – I believe that such works are not justified as mere ‘background information’, as they would be called in America, but contribute to the understanding of sociology through their very substance. I am therefore of the opinion that the study of important texts from the past is an integral part of the study of sociology. The reason is – and I do not think I can keep this apologia for the history of dogma separate from the theoretical positions I have been trying to elaborate for you – the reason is that very many of the problems and moments of theorizing which are encountered in the history of dogma are by no means as obsolete as is readily supposed today. Because of the increasing technicization of the social sciences, whereby these sciences have increasingly become techniques adapted to particular problems occurring within existing society, these earlier questions are simply forgotten. They are only to be found in past texts of social reflection, from Plato and the Socratic left up to – let’s say – thinkers of the generation before last, such as Pareto, Durkheim, Max Weber and Simmel. As a particular example, you can only ascertain what is meant by the concept of the social totality, which I touched on at the beginning of this lecture, if you see how earlier thinkers arrived at the category of totality. Naturally, Marx’s *Capital* has an outstanding place among such earlier texts. These earlier theories – which, incidentally, disagreed among themselves just as much as today’s theories do – may have been naïve in countless details. Even in Marx one is sometimes unable to shake off the feeling that he really based his theory on the relatively innocent model of the single firm, the single factory, and that although he saw joint-stock companies and suchlike things appearing over the horizon, the socialization of monopolism is peripheral to his work, so that one would almost say that the whole work has a moment of naïvety in relation to present conditions. Nevertheless, despite all their problematic aspects and all the objections that can be raised to them, these texts which have been relegated to the history of dogma do enable us to recognize and hold on to problems which have been lost in the highly technical and rationalized sociology of today. In this sense, therefore, it might be said that the history of

dogma is an attempt to recoup the price of progress, by taking account of what has been lost, and noting what was once present at least as an approach, a conception. The talk about ideas going out of date, the assertion that 'Marx is obsolete' or 'Spencer and Comte are passé', is itself a piece of ideology. You can see this from the way the assertion automatically snaps into place; for today, hardly anyone will say that Marxism is a dangerous, revolutionary theory which could threaten to shake society to its foundations – people now are far too sophisticated for that. Now they will just say: 'Oh yes, Marx – that's pure nineteenth century. It has been completely superseded by mathematical economics and subjective sociology, and is now of only historical interest.' I believe, however – and I am appealing here to your mistrust of ideology, Ladies and Gentlemen – that this over-eager assertion of the obsolescence of a phenomenon without indicating precisely in what respect it is out of date is almost always a means of nipping things in the bud, or of covering up wounds which continue to exist in such theoretical conceptions. This could be expressed in psychoanalytic terms by saying that essential moments of society, which have been repressed by the collective consciousness and are to be repelled from it, are almost always present in what is dismissed as obsolete. This unfinished business, which survives in the 'out-of-date', may be precisely what is most important.

I should like to illustrate what I have just said by a few examples from the history of dogma. As you all know, Comte's sociology, his *The Positive Philosophy*,⁹ is centred on a great dichotomy: the dichotomy between the static and dynamic laws of society – the laws of order, as he calls the static ones, and the dynamic laws of society, those of progress. The crudity of this dichotomy is obvious, as is the fact that something as enormously differentiated and complex as society cannot be reduced to two dimensions in such a way. The less so as these two dimensions, the static and the dynamic, are, I would argue, dialectically mediated by each other. That is to say that the dynamic moments of society are brought into play precisely by the so-called static moments; the movement of the productive forces is initiated by the fact that, now as earlier, the relations of production fetter and hold back the productive forces. On the other hand, I would say that this whole question of the dialectic between relations of production and forces of production, which has become a decisive feature of Marxian theory and is, I think, still of central importance today,¹⁰ was first expressed, and in a very striking way, in these relatively crude concepts of Comte's. If I may tell you something about myself, a very specific aspect of the dialectic was revealed to me only by this antithesis between the static and dynamic; and if any

of you care to look at the text 'Über Statik und Dynamik als soziologische Kategorien', now included in the volume *Sociologica II*,¹¹ you will see, perhaps, how theorems which are, in their traditional form, outmoded, and belong, as people say, to the history of dogma, can, if one reflects further on them, give rise to what I presume to think of as extremely topical reflections on the present situation. Such reflections, I would add, are certainly not stimulated to the same degree by most of the formalized, systematic social science which exists today, such as the work of Spencer – [Adorno corrects himself:] I mean of Parsons.¹² As I keep making slips of the tongue and mentioning the name of Spencer, I'll take the opportunity to say that the antithesis, or rather the coupling, between the categories of 'integration' and 'differentiation' in Spencer¹³ gives rise to the weightiest sociological considerations. It is likely that the meaning of the concept of integration can only be correctly understood if it has been seen in the form it takes in Spencer – from whom, incidentally, it made its way to Durkheim¹⁴ before becoming established, through Durkheim's school, in the sociology of our day. One of the points on which all sociologists are undoubtedly in agreement today is that this concept is of crucial importance to an understanding of present-day society. The structuralists' concept of structure is really nothing other than this concept of integration, and its real roots, which lie in the concept of social development itself, can only be properly found in Spencer. You may well find that Spencer's famous thesis of the parallelism between integration and differentiation calls to mind the highly topical sociological question whether integration and differentiation do actually still run parallel today, or whether that is not the case, and that precisely a divergence between these two moments is becoming apparent – as I myself believe. Apart from that, Spencer's system of sociology is to be recommended simply on the grounds that it offers an unlimited wealth of material and perspectives, which cannot be expected in the same way of the strictly controlled sociology of our time.

In this connection I would mention, finally, the sociology of Tarde, which relates essentially to the category of 'imitation',¹⁵ and thus raised the question of mimesis, as we then called it, for sociology for the first time. Discussion of this problem has withered in the most remarkable way in current sociology, and could be re-awakened by an intensive study of Tarde. I consider that work on Tarde would be a very rewarding subject for degree dissertations and suchlike tasks.

In contrast to the view confined to what actually happens to be present, it is only in the history of dogma that the dynamic moment, not of sociological thought but of society itself, is really to be found.

Everything that has been discarded as superfluous – superfluous, that is, for technical purposes – has not been simply disposed of, but lives on. That, precisely, is the special situation of sociology, and I therefore believe, in contrast to prevailing sociological doctrine, that a reading of earlier sociological writings of major stature is not merely an aid to an understanding of present-day society, but is an absolute prerequisite for it. The new thinking which goes beyond the mere reiteration of registered facts is frequently encapsulated in such theorems, which are regarded as obsolete by the current, positivistic historiography of knowledge and are consigned to the scholarly scrapheap.

In my next lecture I shall start talking to you about the relationship of sociology to other disciplines – that is, I shall begin defining its boundaries, in order to guide you into the problematics of the subject from a different direction.

LECTURE TWELVE

25 June 1968

[Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to begin by saying something about the question of the demarcation of sociology from other disciplines – but not for the formalistic reason that I attach much or, to tell the truth, any importance to such demarcation. I do so because I believe that the questions surrounding so-called demarcation may well throw some light firstly on some fundamental epistemological principles and secondly on the special situation of sociology. Now,] first of all, to avoid giving this a quixotic aspect, I should say that in the sciences one cannot do without a certain element of demarcation, or, as they say in England in such cases, without a certain measure of horse sense.

If one were to deal in a sociology lecture with preventive dentistry, simply because dental care, too, is dependent on all possible social moments, that would be clearly absurd. One has to admit, just to keep a certain amount of firm ground under one's feet, that there are specifically sociological methods and specifically sociological questions. This points towards a very general circumstance, and one which, I believe, is fundamental to a consideration of science and the crisis of science today. It is the circumstance that while, on one hand, the scientific division of labour is something very questionable, for the reasons I have explained to you – namely that it arises only from method, from subjective reason, and not from the subject matter itself – on the other hand, without a division of labour, and without thought having been passed through the discipline of that division, progress

in the sciences would not be conceivable. And if the positivist school never ceases to insist that the natural sciences, for example, owe their spectacular successes to precisely their adaptation to the division of labour, the truth of that assertion cannot be denied.

I shall take the opportunity to point out to you that the scientific division of labour itself has a socio-economic model, in that it is mediated by the division of labour in material production, which first emerged in the early-bourgeois phase of manufacturing. I would refer those of you who are interested in this to the work of Franz Borkenau,² which came out in a series published by the Institut für Sozialforschung in the early 1930s. It dealt essentially with this area of ideas. To mention just a few subjects or concepts that can be termed specifically sociological, one might think of survey techniques using questionnaires and interviews, which originated in social research investigations. They, incidentally, can be traced back genetically to the eighteenth century and, revealingly, to the planning needs of the closed socio-economic system predominant at that time, mercantilism. Because the individual questionnaire is just one element in a larger statistical context, and because the whole sample is supposed to stand for a 'universe'³ of one kind or another, such methods are predicated from the outset, by their very purpose, on the 'sphere of plurality'. And this, of course, may be considered the specifically sociological sphere.

All the same, I should point out straight away that even these methods are by no means exclusive to sociology, as you may suppose; in psychology there are a great many studies which, in terms of the questionnaire technique used, seem indistinguishable from sociological investigations. This fact, which I am only touching on here and shall come back to later, has, I believe, been far too little regarded in the thriving current attempts to found sociology as an absolutely autonomous discipline. Other activities which belong in the same context include the attempts to pin down specifically social behaviour by means of certain experiments, attempts which have been taken furthest in America – by Schachter's school, for example.⁴

I would mention in passing that, in order to meet the requirement of the classical concept of the scientific experiment – that it should be replicable at will by any qualified scholar – these experimental activities have been forced to restrict themselves to such a relatively small number of variables, as they are termed, and thus to depart so far from social reality in general, that their much-vaunted exactitude is out of any proportion to what (to use Popper's term) might be called their 'relevance'.⁵ That is not, of course, to deny their value in studying social aggression, for example. Other approaches which come into the same category are the highly ingenious techniques of so-called

sociometry, associated in America with the name of Moreno.⁶ You can find an adequate explanation of Moreno's specifically sociological technique of sociometry in the survey of the techniques of empirical social research published by the Institut für Sozialforschung many years ago, but after its return from emigration, in the *Handwörterbuch der Sozialwissenschaften*.⁷ It must be said, however, that because this technique consists essentially in investigating the relationships between single individuals in a group, from which conclusions are drawn about group behaviour and group structure, this technique, too, has its psychological dimension. I shall take this opportunity to encourage you to look at the essay I have just mentioned on 'Empirical Social Research' simply because, in a relatively brief text and without getting lost in the details of particular techniques, it will give the beginners among you a certain overview of the techniques which are brought together under the heading of empirical social research. Individual publications in certain journals of Columbia University⁸ go considerably further. Of the literature on the subject known to me, these still provide the most sensible and, above all, the most factual and experience-based introduction to the whole field of empirical social research.

But in calling these matters specifically sociological, while at the same time pointing out that the boundary with psychology, for example, is fluid at this point, I am touching on a circumstance which does cause us to reflect on the boundaries between these disciplines. It is the same situation to which my Cologne colleague Scheuch recently gave a polemical twist by calling for a sociology which 'seeks to be nothing other than sociology'.⁹ Now, such demands, when uttered in a tone of rhetorical disenchantment, with the implication that those who act differently must be somewhat behind the times, always carry a certain suggestive power. I believe that anyone who stood up at a meeting, banged his fist on the table and declared: 'We demand a sociology that seeks to be nothing other than sociology,' could be sure of a certain measure of collective assent. If, in what I am trying to explain to you now, I have to exercise, to some slight degree, a function *vis-à-vis* yourselves and your own reflections, then it is probably not the least part of this function to awaken your scepticism towards more-or-less automatic reactions of that kind. To my mind that famous and plausible demand is linked to an attribute of sociology which it does, indeed, share with philosophy, but in an entirely different sense to the one for which the positivist school criticizes the dialectical. I mean that the two disciplines are linked in a dimension which, initially at least, has practically nothing to do with the question of speculation versus the investigation of mere facts. I would like

to respond to Herr Scheuch with a no less polemical thesis, though in the hope that you will not find it suggestive in the way I consider his to be. For I believe that sociology, simply by virtue of its subject matter, is not a clearly defined science with clearly defined content, of the kind we are accustomed to find on what is sometimes called the map of learning. This attribute is what sociology has in common with philosophy and at the same time is the point which presents the greatest difficulty both to students about to study sociology and to the established traditional sciences in relation to that discipline. And I think that one only does justice to the essential nature of sociology if one recognizes its non-specialist character from the outset. There is a certain kind of resistance to the cult of the specialist which is not only a modern phenomenon but can be found equally in the writings on academic study of Fichte and Schelling,¹⁰ and in the dramas of Ibsen from the 1880s.¹¹ The rebellion against 'specialism' thus goes back at least 170 years, and it does no harm, perhaps, to remember in connection with such things that the opposition to tradition can look back on a tradition of its own. Now, it is no accident that this moment of rebellion against the idea of the specialist stems to such a major extent from students of sociology. The reason may be – and this is only a conjecture – that in studying sociology young people are made directly and keenly aware that the matters with which they are really concerned cannot be understood in the manner of the traditional type of specialist study. This can be demonstrated fairly straightforwardly *e contrario*. Even the most simple-minded person could perceive how unlike a specialist subject sociology is from the fact that there is really nothing 'between heaven and earth' – and Hegel's formulation,¹² used in a different context, can be quoted with good reason here – which cannot be considered sociologically. This is by no means so different from the situation sixty or seventy years ago, when all the creatures of the earth were subjected to psychological consideration. I referred earlier to preventive dentistry, which sounds absurd enough in this connection. But it is less absurd than it appears if you recall that medical sociology, and the question not only of the sociological aspects of medicine but, especially, of the connection between medical systems and social systems, have, indeed, long been a subject of study. The term 'hyphen-sociology' has been coined to express this situation, and the fields you generally come across under the headings of 'practical sociology' or 'applied sociology' are really nothing other than such applications of the sociological perspective to originally non-sociological subjects. It is generally assumed that the sociological method used in all these 'hyphen-sociologies' is more or less the same. But as that is an assumption which I believe I may to

some extent have undermined in the preceding lectures, we cannot rely on it here. These applied sociologies represent something which is referred to in dialectical logic as a 'bad infinity'.¹³ I know that from my own experience. When I was still having to run the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie there were specialist committees incessantly submitting applications to set up more specialist committees, and it sometimes seemed as if every member of the association would finish up with his own committee for some special branch of applied sociology. Now, since sociological perspectives or questions – I'm deliberately expressing myself somewhat generally here – are applicable to everything, it does naturally follow that sociology cannot be defined or pinned down simply in terms of its subject matter – still less so because, as I have tried to show, its central concept, the concept of society, is itself not an object but a category of mediation.

But if sociology has not, and is not, such an area of subject matter, those of you whom I have not succeeded in frightening off with this appalling confession [*Laughter*] will rightly ask what sociology actually is. To this I would answer first of all quite simply that it is reflection on social moments within any given area of subject matter – reflections ranging from the simple physiognomic registration of social implications to the formulation of theories on the social totality. Sociology is orientated towards these social moments in a necessary, not a peripheral, way, so that, in order to be possible at all, it must have areas of subject matter within it which are, in themselves, alien to it. This is what makes the demarcation of sociology so problematic. French Structuralism – to take a very recent example within social thought – which is linked above all to the names of Lévi-Strauss¹⁴ and Lacan¹⁵ and has had a very strong influence on sociological thinking, derives its material primarily and essentially from anthropology and, beyond that, from very specific trends in linguistic research, represented above all by Trubetsky¹⁶ in Vienna. Structuralism – on which I hope to hold a seminar the term after next – does this for very good reasons, which are fully justified within its own theories. And if one were to try to separate structuralism – which considers itself essentially a theory of society – from this ethnological or anthropological material, there would really be nothing left of its original conception. If one insists rigidly on any single definition of sociology, this peculiar impoverishment becomes unmistakable. The formal definitions then seem, on one hand, to flap scarecrow-like about the concepts, leaving hardly any connection between the definitions and the material questions, while, on the other hand, the definitions impose certain limits on sociological thought, narrowing it in a way which estranges it from its true tasks.

In this connection – I have long been meaning to do this and I think it would fit well here – I should like to devote at least a few sentences to the definition of sociology, modelled to some extent on juristic definitions, which is to be found at the beginning of Max Weber's *magnum opus*, *Economy and Society*. This, of course, deserves special attention because it is backed by the immense conceptual labour of one of the most knowledgeable and intellectually productive sociologists who ever lived, at least within the German tradition. The influence of this definition has, of course, gone far beyond the work of Max Weber himself, and can still be felt, above all in the structural-functional systems of Parsons and Merton¹⁷ in America. I should like to show you that this definition is by no means as self-evident as it might at first sight appear. At this point I'd like to give you a word of caution. If I express some misgivings about Max Weber's formulation, it is not my intention that you should go home and say: 'Adorno did a nice, or not-so-nice, hatchet job on Max Weber today.' And it is quite certainly not my intention that you should think that such a critique could dispose of such an immense intellectual edifice as that of Weber, so that you would need to pay it no further attention. I can only warn you against such a reaction as emphatically – if I am rightly informed – as Herr von Friedeburg did in his seminar yesterday. For to consider that any sociological phenomenon about which one of your teachers has said something critical is thereby rendered unusable, finished, would deprive you of the most fruitful part of your studies. One can only study anything, no matter what, in a meaningful way, and only do justice to the subjects – meaning, here, the great texts – with which one is concerned, if one treats them with respect. That is, one cannot do so by immediately adopting an attitude of superior detachment, on the grounds of some alleged quality of being well informed. As Hegel put it in the *Phenomenology* about 160 years ago: one cannot presume to stand above the matters in hand, simply because one is not inside them.¹⁸ On the other hand, however, the lure of such a definition – the sense it gives that if one adheres to it one will stand on solid ground from which one will have the whole of sociology at one's command, is no less strong, and the trick lies in neither trusting and blindly following authority in such cases, nor believing that as soon as you have recognized the problematic nature of that authority you are free to rise above it. The definition in *Economy and Society*, which comes right at the start, is as follows: 'Sociology (in the sense in which this highly ambiguous word is used here)' – for he is a nominalist, meaning that he does not attribute objective meanings to concepts but defines them in terms of what he means by them – 'is a science concerning itself with the interpretative understanding of

social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. We shall speak of "action" insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior – be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is "social" insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of *others* – and, one should add, in line with Weber's meaning: according to the average chance which certain actions have of reaching others – 'and is thereby oriented in its course.'¹⁹ That sounds as precise as any definition a lawyer might dictate to his pupils, and I can well imagine the power of suggestion emanating from it. Nevertheless – and I want only to point this out to you here – a whole mass of problems is contained within these seemingly so plausible propositions. First of all: 'Social action is to be understood interpretatively.' I shall try here to restrict myself to matters accessible within your relatively limited experience, and which do not presuppose that you have as yet performed wonders of sociological scholarship. But if you have dipped into some sociological writings, especially those of Max Weber, you will have found that by no means everything done by sociology has to do with social action, and that to a very large degree sociological analysis relates to thing-like, objectified forms which cannot be directly resolved into action – in other words, all those things which, in the broadest sense, can be referred to as institutions. And in this respect there is no difference between, let's say, the Marxian analysis of the objective form of the commodity and the concept of the social institution as represented by contemporary German sociologists such as Schelsky and, above all, Arnold Gehlen.²⁰ So the whole study of institutions is not a study of action, although, obviously, it is connected with social action and with the theory of social action. But the entire meaning of the concept of the institution, or of the objective social arrangement or, as can be said in many cases, of the organization, and also of all that which in Marx is called the relations of production, resides precisely in the fact that we are here concerned not with direct action but, if you like, with congealed action, or with some form of congealed labour and with something which has become autonomously detached from direct social action. Whether it can again be made transparent to immediate action, whether it can be retranslated into action, is a second question – and one on which the different schools of social thought are very radically divided. But first of all it has to be said that this whole area is decisive for sociology. And I do not use the term 'decisive' in any vague sense or as a *lapsus linguae*, but quite deliberately, in order to make clear that social destiny, and therefore the social action of each individual person, which finally is really of interest to sociology – Max Weber is undoubtedly right in this – is dependent on these institutions, and can only be explained in terms

of them. It would be far less correct to say that this action should be seen as the final and immediate substrate of the institutions, or that the social as such could be explained in terms of social action. But Weber goes further: he refers to an 'interpretative' understanding of social action. Given the extraordinarily subjectivistic formulation of this definition, there is a strong temptation to misunderstand interpretation here to mean psychological interpretation. I should say that, of course, Max Weber was not thinking of psychological interpretation – this, again, is connected to the separation of sociology from other disciplines. But to the uninitiated, that is far from obvious. And Max Weber was called upon to make the utmost exertions, and highly ingenious exertions, in order to differentiate his concept of interpretation from the psychological meaning of the term. To do so, he in fact limited interpretation to rationality, to a rational means–end relationship, which, according to him, can be seen to be present in subjective action. And since rationality itself, as psychology teaches us, is nothing other than the examination of reality, social objectivity, by which subjective action must always be orientated, is made, through the inspired mediation between the concepts of interpretation and rationality, to penetrate very deeply into Max Weber's subjectively conceived sociology. As you can see, these reflections are quite far removed from the definition itself, but without them a definition as apparently simple and obvious as the one given by Max Weber that I have read out to you would hardly make any sense at all.

But this leads to yet another question, which I have already touched on in connection with the argument between Weber and Durkheim over method.²¹ This is the question about intelligibility itself. In Weber's definition you find the possibility of the intelligibility of so-called 'social action' posited as a kind of axiom. But I suggested earlier not only that institutions have set themselves autonomously apart from human beings, but that, seen historically, these heteronomous institutions are probably older than the so-called 'free action' of human beings, which has only established its own possibility over against the institutions in an extremely arduous and painful process. If you concede that point, then the question immediately arises, in an acute form, whether the interpretative stance attributed as if self-evidently to sociology here is really the only valid one. Might not even the opposite be true, as expressed in Durkheim's call for *chosisme*? By this he meant that in coming up against the specifically social, as something impenetrably hard and opposed to the understanding subject, one should abstain from precisely such interpretation. I would just go on to point out that a concept such as interpretation, as introduced by Max Weber, does naturally have certain implications for his value-free sociology, which believes it should strictly avoid

making value judgements – implications which such a conception of sociology would find very hard to tolerate. For if all social action is really to be interpreted as subjectively meaningful, this implies that all social action is already endowed with meaning. The whole course of the world then appears to be reducible to something like subjective interpretation, and is thereby potentially justified as something already meaningful in itself. Weber would have been far too cautious to admit such a thing, and, were he still alive, he would probably have contradicted me violently here in his famously thunderous tones. But that the constitutive treatment of the concept of social meaning contains the possibility of the affirmative, even though the idea of a critique of this meaning is not implicit in sociology, may have emerged to some extent from the few reflections I have presented to you. That social agents associate their actions with a social, subjective meaning presupposes a kind of rationality in the behaviour of human beings which, likewise, cannot be posited as self-evident. If Weber asks about the meaning which people associate with their actions, he ought also to account for the differences which exist between the meaning which people advance subjectively for their actions, and the objective meaning of those actions. For example, the action of joining certain radical right-wing movements may very well be subjectively associated with a meaning such as improving the living conditions of one's own people and raising it to a position of so-called 'mastery'. But it can also emerge that what such actions mean objectively in terms of world history and society as a whole is the exact opposite of this meaning, which nevertheless exists. Not to mention the fact that this attaching of a meaning to social actions is, of course, an ideal construction which is about as realistic as the assumption of an international treaty, since the great majority of the so-called 'social actions' of human beings are carried out not in relation to some imagined social goal but more-or-less as reflex actions. Naturally, ostensibly subjective aims play a part, but only within a network of drives and impulses, psychologically expressive actions and all manner of other things which decisively tinge the social relevance of such an action. This is why the social relevance of an action – and therefore its worthiness to be dealt with in sociology – does not necessarily coincide with its subjectively purported meaning.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have only set out these ideas in order to show you that the most famous and the most penetrating attempt to provide an absolutely autonomous foundation for sociology in relation to other sciences is anything but as self-evidently valid as its axiomatic character postulates. In my next lecture, the day after tomorrow, I shall continue discussing the limits of sociology and the problematic nature of those limits.

LECTURE THIRTEEN

27 June 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my last lecture I tried to define in principle the peculiar position of sociology in relation to the neighbouring disciplines. I described it as the social self-reflection of these various disciplines, not a specialist subject in the usual sense. Of course, there are all kinds of things which can be considered specifically sociological in terms of method, factual content and the history of dogma, and which – to see the matter from the practical side – can be learned by students of sociology. Perhaps I should draw all this together by saying that sociology is an attempt – even if a necessarily limited and partial one – to remedy the scholarly division of labour by relating the subject matter of scholarship back to the whole, which is society, yet cannot be grasped as an immediate fact.

You may perhaps have read some comments in the press in the last few days in which colleagues of mine, such as Herr Scheuch, have recommended that sociology be studied primarily as a subsidiary subject.¹ Now, on the question of major and subsidiary subjects, I would say that this is a matter for each individual to judge, although, of course, the difficult situation sociologists face in finding professional employment does make it advisable, from the point of view of self-preservation, not to rely entirely on sociology in one's studies. I have already said this to you and I would like to repeat it here. But even leaving aside the practical situation, there is, of course, something to be said for combining sociology with a 'hard science', as Scheuch recommends. If a discipline is to be pursued in a meaningful way and

not reduced to tedious fact-finding, if it consists essentially in reflection and not in the primary assimilation of facts, it naturally runs the risk of suffering a certain atrophy. There is a danger that reflection will finish up by positing itself, so that the situation arises which Hegel characterized – and I hope I will not bore you by quoting the formulation again – by referring to those who are above the matter because they are not in it.² Sociology can lead quite easily to what Max Weber – though in a somewhat spiteful formulation which is not to my taste – called ‘mind mania’ [*Geisthuberei*] in contradistinction to ‘fact mania’ [*Stoffhuberei*].³ This refers to a situation in which, in a sense, one knows in advance the answer to any question with which one is confronted regarding one’s special subject matter. An essential attribute of the concept of reflection is that upon which one can reflect – in exactly the same way as the concept of the mediated, which, as I have tried to explain in these lectures, is constitutive of sociology, always presupposes something immediate running through these mediations and captured by them. In this sense I believe it is important to study what would earlier have been called a ‘craft’ in addition to sociology, although this craft certainly does not need to be what is called a ‘hard discipline’. But if I may speak from my own experience I can say that I have not regretted having acquired historical techniques from musicology and, to some extent, techniques of the natural sciences from psychology, and I do believe that, in this sense, limiting oneself to sociology without adding to it the substrate or substrates to which it refers is somewhat problematic. However, I would advise those whose central interests are sociological rather than, for example, philosophical to choose their particular subjects from the point of view of whether they offer them material by which they wish to orientate their sociological reflections.

Nevertheless, even after what I have told you about its relationship to the adjacent disciplines, you should not understand sociology as the methodological integration of all these different specialist fields. Nowadays, of course, you can hear talk of interdisciplinary studies on every street-corner, as if the fact that disciplines separated by the division of labour were somehow working together could, by itself, actually solve the problem which lies behind the division of labour. If I might state the matter as it is seen by the so-called ‘Frankfurt School’, what matters to sociology is not so much a collaboration of this kind, although direct co-operation with psychology and economics is undoubtedly indispensable, as I shall explain later. But what matters far more is that one should become aware of the mediations – or let me express that better – of the objective interactions operating within a single specialist area in which one immerses oneself; these interac-

tions are immanent in the sense that within each separate specialist area with which sociology concerns itself, other specialist areas are necessarily contained. As I am today in the process of setting out for you something like the idea of sociology, perhaps I might try once again to state this in one sentence: sociology attempts scientifically, using the means of science, to establish the unity of science which the individual fields of science form socially and which at the same time, through science, is continuously, and inevitably, being lost. This process of thought – which, however, must immerse itself in the specific scientific fields and not escape into abstract, general structures lying above them – seems to me to be the true task of sociology. And the difference between the dialectical conception of sociology and the structural-functional theory so prevalent today lies in the fact that Parsons's theory⁴ seeks unity as a shell, that is, a kind of unity in which the categories are so selected that all the life sciences, or the so-called human sciences, are accommodated within it as a kind of continuum, whereas it is our conception to seek the concrete unity of society – instead of that abstract generality – through interpretative immersion in a given specialist area. This reflection also makes clear, incidentally, the central importance which the concept of interpretation has for the conception of sociology I am attempting to make clear to you.

To prevent what I have just said from remaining too abstract, too general, I think I owe it to you to explain in somewhat more detail what I mean by saying that the social perspective is that which leads to social categories or to social interconnections within the particular specialist area being studied. To demonstrate this I shall select psychology as a model – and the particular form of psychology which, through being centred on the individual and its monadological dynamic, seems furthest removed from the social context. I am referring to psychoanalysis in its strict, Freudian form, which was criticized quite early on for being too remote from society, and for considering the individual in abstraction from concrete society. All the revisionist endeavours of psychoanalysis have been connected exactly with the desire to correct this situation. Perhaps I might refer those of you who are interested in these attempts and the problematic contained in them to my study 'Die revidierte Psychoanalyse'; it's a very old work developed twenty years ago from a lecture I gave to the Psychoanalytic Society in San Francisco, and is to be found today, translated from the original, in *Sociologica II*, on which I am basing some of what I have to say in this lecture.⁵ To come back to Freud, it is characteristic of Freudian psychology that, through its purely internal connections, it is constantly coming up against social concepts. This happens just because, being based on a division of labour, it is obliged to respect the division

of labour by a compulsion very similar to the one commonly asserted by sociologists. Of course, the social concepts it encounters – and I believe I am here telling you something about the general logic of science – are almost always of a certain abstractness. They are not so concrete as they could be made in sociology, for example. It is generally the case in the sciences that, when two scientific disciplines are combined, the categories taken over from one discipline into another almost always lack the stringency, fullness and concreteness of those of the other discipline. I shall not trace the origin of this phenomenon here. Perhaps I might refer those who are interested to the chapter on ‘Mediation’ in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*,⁶ in which this phenomenon is discussed in principle; and something similar applies to the social categories in Freud. Nevertheless, those of you who have to concern yourselves with Freud and psychoanalysis in any way will perhaps recall having come across the term ‘vital need’⁷ [*Lebensnot*] in the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (which, incidentally, I still consider the best introduction to the whole field of psychoanalysis, and which I would urge every sociologist to study). This term refers to the compulsion to make those renunciations of direct drive gratification which are then propagated in the whole mechanism of repression and everything else they bring about within the psyche. This vital need is simply posited by Freud without any closer definition. However, if the concept of the vital need is examined more closely, it only takes on meaning if it is not interpreted as something psychological. That, however, would make it foreign to the system; something would be taken into psychology which could not be explained in purely psychological terms. What this term means first of all is simply – or let me put it more precisely: what objectively underlies the term, regardless of whether Freud fully realized it or not, is the following circumstance: society, as arranged up to now, has not produced sufficient provisions [*Lebensmittel*] – in the broadest sense of ‘means of life’ – for all its members; and – to extend this idea – even today, when it would potentially be possible for all people to receive sufficient provisions to maintain them at the present cultural ‘standard’, this is prevented by the conditions of social production, by the relations of production, and therefore simply by the order of property relationships. It is the simple fact of shortage, of an outward shortage which is then prolonged in the system of control, which – to put it somewhat more concretely – has created the necessity for the kind of social labour which, in its form up to now, has been inconceivable without work discipline; and which consequently, in order to bring into being the so-called work ethic which has enabled people to produce enough to live, has imposed all those renunciations of the erotic

drive the dynamic theory of which forms the essential content of the Freudian doctrine, insofar as it is a theoretical psychology.

Incidentally, to prevent any misunderstandings from arising at this point, I shall take the opportunity to tell you that the classification of the sciences which opposes psychoanalysis, as a clinical-therapeutic discipline, to psychology is invalid and arbitrary, and that in America it's actually no longer maintained in the form it has had up to now. Psychoanalysis sets out, of course, to be a dynamic, topological and genetic psychology; and the received opinion in the scholarly world, by which the trained psychologist, meaning the experimental psychologist, is regarded as the only proper psychologist while the psychoanalyst is treated as a somewhat eccentric kind of doctor, does justice neither to the intrinsic claims of the Freudian theory nor to the actual scientific situation.

Now, it follows that if the concept of the vital need is made concrete in this way as the continuous, self-reproducing situation of shortage, then so-called psychological processes contain the social moment at their core. The social moment is, indeed, at the origin of that concept, and without it the psychological processes could not be understood at all. This, incidentally, merely confirms that the individual person with whom psychoanalysis concerns itself is an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the social context in which individuals find themselves. That is not to say – although I cannot go into this now – that there is not good reason for psychology to concern itself with the individual, since individuation, which in a certain way severs individuals from society, does refer to a natural circumstance: the fact that we come into the world simply as individual beings, and not as coral colonies, for example. However, this circumstance is reproduced once more by the arrangement of society, which, through the dominant form of exchange between individual contracting parties, is constituted as an individualistic society. For this reason the category of the individual, which is generally regarded as antithetical to society and is therefore excluded from sociology, is a social category in the fullest sense. It is not social only in that simply everything which is individual and takes place within the realm of individual psychology can be directly ascribed to society, but rather in that the category of individuation itself, and the specific factors which form individuality, must be interpreted as internalizations of social compulsions, needs and demands. In addition, there are many more such references to society within psychology. I shall mention here only the whole area of so-called 'archaic images' with which Freud deals repeatedly. These are the images which cannot be explained by psychoanalytic work on the individual, that is, in a purely immanent way, in terms of separate, self-contained monads. Freud demonstrated this very radically, by showing

that the mechanism of association and the connected mechanism of individual interpretation stopped short of these archaic images. And Freud referred to such images – it must indeed be said – as a legacy of the collective, as the ‘collective unconscious’ sedimented in each individual.⁸

I would like to point out in passing – as it is far too little known today – that the whole, later theory of Jung on the ‘collective unconscious’⁹ is already contained in this aspect of Freud. As very often happens in the case of major intellectual phenomena, when the unity and grandeur of their original conception disintegrates, individual fragments are torn out by the epigones, who each seek a chunk for themselves, if you will forgive me this inelegant image, and regard it as the philosopher’s stone by which absolutely everything can be explained. In contrast to this, the truly important conceptions are almost always distinguished by the fact that they do not include any such magic words, that they do not have any specific category by which everything can be explained once and for all. Rather, they form contexts or constellations of categories as a means of explanation, instead of calling on one of them to be a maid-of-all-work. But – and this is a socio-psychological observation – just when a theory has a keyword, such as Jung’s ‘collective unconscious’ or Durkheim’s ‘collective consciousness’¹⁰ or whatever it may be, such ‘maxims’, as Hegel already termed this phenomenon,¹¹ take on a peculiar suggestive power. And one can only encourage scholars who want to make their mark in the world and have a big success in the market to think up such a ‘maxim’, some single category that can be attached to everything, so that everything under the sun is given a label. But that’s just by the way.

At any rate, it can be seen here that at precisely the deepest stratum of the individual, of individuation, at the level to which the dynamic of individual drives does not extend, the social, collective moment asserts itself. You find here, if I might permit myself a short excursus, a surprisingly dialectical motif even in a theory as thoroughly positivist in conception as Freud’s psychoanalysis, although, had this been pointed out to him, he would no doubt have burst out in the same expressions of horror as any positivist sociologist today. The dialectical motif lies in the fact that Freud made the discovery – quite genuinely, simply through working on his own material – that the more deeply one explores the phenomena of human individuation, the more unreservedly one grasps the individual as a self-contained and dynamic entity, the closer one draws to that in the individual which is really no longer individual. The Freudian treatment of the individual therefore provides a splendid example of my requirement that precisely by immersing oneself in the specific categories of the particular sciences,

and not from outside them, one should become aware of the social content of these categories. According to Freudian theory, it appears that, on the surface, certain recurrent, similar, relatively abstract situations predominate, being standardized by the reality principle to which all human beings have to adapt, but that a differentiation emerges if one immerses oneself in the so-called psychical dynamic, in the unconscious mechanisms, and above all in the interplay between the unconscious and the individual ego; and then – at a still deeper level, as if at the core of individuation – one becomes aware of the collective. Freud himself, moreover, going far beyond his theory of ‘archaic images’, formulated this as a fundamental principle in the theory of the generality and undifferentiatedness of the id,¹² of the peculiar collection of psychical drives which lie at the basis of each individual and which, according to Freud, are really more-or-less identical as a collective inheritance in each individual. Freud’s psychology, though individualistic in intention, not only leads beyond the individual plane, but then becomes more and more abstract – despite its highly concrete approach – in its analysis of individual observations. Closely connected to this, moreover, is something particularly exposed to sociological criticism: Freud’s general tendency – because of the supposed invariance and constancy of the id, which is identical in all human beings – to underestimate the possibility of individuation, of variability, to an extraordinary extent. The same applies to the inclination of this theory, just because it has come across an ‘archaic inheritance’ within the individual, to regard human beings as very largely unalterable – although it has been supported in this from prehistory up to the present. As a result of these tendencies, finally, it regards the conditions of human repression as inescapable, being the only possible form of a socially acceptable resolution of the so-called ‘Oedipus complex’.

Society extends further into psychoanalysis, of course, in the form of the theory of the so-called ‘super-ego’ – to use a third psychological category to illustrate my point. In his early phase Freud called this the ‘ego ideal’.¹³ By this he meant, stated simply, the psychical authority sometimes referred to as conscience, but which he derives from the dynamic of the drives. It is really nothing other than the traditional paternal authority transmitted within the bourgeois liberal family to each individual through the father figure or a father symbol or image. It thus functions as an agency of society. The mechanisms of so-called ‘socialization’, that is, the mechanisms by which alone we, born as separate biological entities, are unable – I meant to say, are *able* – to become a *zoon politikon*, are precisely the mechanisms which are summed up by the term ‘super-ego’. That ‘unable’, by the way, was a slip which Freud would undoubtedly have appreciated.

I hope that, by these examples, I have demonstrated in a sufficiently concrete way the somewhat general thesis I put forward at the beginning of this lecture: the assertion that immersion in particular disciplines necessarily leads, in a constitutive way, to recognition of the sociological moments which are either not clearly seen as such by the disciplines concerned, or are at best disregarded and consigned to the margins. This can, incidentally, be given a far more general or, if you like, philosophical-dialectical twist, by saying that the dialectic of the particular and the general, as taught by Hegel, with the sense that the particular is the general and the general the particular, was rediscovered in the great scientific project of Freud, against the grain, so to speak, of psychology. For Freud came up against the fact that the innermost core on which the psychology of the single individual rests is itself something general: namely certain very general – though admittedly archaic – structures of the social context in which individuals are contained.

However, these considerations concerning the relationship, or dialectic, of individual and society can and must be encountered in sociology also. And it may be useful for me to point out that one of the temptations of sociology is to overlook the fact that the way in which the general manifests itself in the individual is very extensively mediated through psychology. This mediation occurs wherever the process is not rationally purposive, is not guided by truly rational considerations relating to social conditions. Sociology is prone to this misapprehension through its desire to remain true to its concept of society, and, above all, to preserve the preponderance which objective social reality actually has from being dissolved in mere psychology. I have just told you that the super-ego or the conscience was defined by Freud as the agency of social control over the individual represented by certain symbolic figures. This super-ego, as it participates in the process of socialization, is not, in the first place, something external, but is a psychical agency. Thus, the social universal embodied in the super-ego – the commandments and requirements: thou shalt not steal, thou shalt work hard, thou shalt be sexually faithful – all these commandments, which are in reality social, are largely internalized in the individual by psychological mechanisms. And I believe that a sociology which forgets the mediation through individual subjectivity is no less false and inadequate and – let me say it – no less dogmatic than, conversely, would be a sociology which maintained – as, incidentally, Freud was apt to do – that sociology was nothing other than psychology applied to a plurality of people. This latter idea is invalidated by the mere fact that the social compulsions to which we are subject are alien and external to us to such a

degree that we cannot identify them directly with that which goes on within us and within our esteemed inner life. It is my intention to use this thesis as a concrete example of the principle of reciprocal effects, which you may recall. I shall therefore elucidate it very briefly in relation to a problem of sociology – the famous problem encountered by Durkheim. He attempted to demonstrate the absolute autonomy of social compulsion by the example of suicide,¹⁴ as many of you may know. He did so by noting that, firstly, suicide figures remain fairly constant within broadly homogeneous historical phases, and, secondly, that average suicide figures, as supplied by statistics, are dependent on how far the people concerned are subject to closed or non-closed systems of social norms. He established a kind of hierarchy of religions, to the effect that – in France, of course – Catholicism provides the most definite norms, then Judaism and then Protestantism. It is, of course, understood that these studies date from the nineties of the last century. How things would look today is another matter. Durkheim drew the conclusion that suicide is a *fait social*, a social fact, which has absolutely nothing to do with individual psychology, because it manifests itself with such constancy and statistical regularity. However, social regularity is in fact ‘mystified’,¹⁵ to use an expression of Marx’s, by such an approach. That is to say that if it cannot be stated and understood in what way the structural peculiarities of closed or non-closed systems of norms assert their influence within individuals; in other words, if nothing can be said about the psychological mechanisms which induce a person to commit suicide or prevent him from doing so, suicide is simply turned into an incomprehensible miracle performed by some mysterious being. This, moreover, is likely to be the impression given to any unprejudiced reader of Durkheim’s work. Such a mysterious being does indeed appear in his work, namely the collective consciousness, the *conscience collective*, which performs the miracle – and to which, in order to maintain this absurdity, Durkheim then attributes in the most paradoxical way all the properties which he has previously taken away from the individual and from individual psychology. I tell you this only so that you can understand in a tangible form why we of the Frankfurt School found ourselves incorporating so-called ‘psychological’ considerations in the so-called ‘objective’ theory of society at a relatively early stage. We did it, in the first place, for the simple and tangible reason that without exact knowledge of the projection of society inside individuals it would not be comprehensible that countless individuals – one might well say: the overwhelming majority of all people – constantly act even now in a manner contrary to their own rational interests when confronted with real-life situations. – Thank you for your attention.

LECTURE FOURTEEN

2 July 1968

Dear Fellow Students,

You will have read in the newspapers that the Prosecutor General of the State of Hessen, Fritz Bauer,¹ has died of a heart attack. I think it right to say here that he was not only an extraordinary person, but one whose intellectual and political qualities were objectively translated into what he did. I know of very few people who have worked with such passion and such energy to ensure that calamity is not repeated in Germany and that fascism in all its menacing guises is resisted. He did this with quite extraordinary single-mindedness and with unparalleled moral courage. From my very exact knowledge of him as a person I believe I am not guilty of exaggeration or sentimentality if I tell you that a factor contributing to Fritz Bauer's premature death was his despair over the fact that everything he had hoped for, everything he wanted to see done differently and better in Germany, seemed to him imperilled, and that he was tormented by incessant doubts as to whether he had been right to return from emigration. I myself have long dismissed these doubts. But I must say that there are developments in Germany, such as the adoption of the Emergency Powers Act,² as well as a number of other things, which make it seem very plausible to me to think that Bauer, who succumbed also to a heart complaint, suffered so much under these things that they finally severed the thread of life in him. I should like to ask you, dear fellow students, to stand in memory of the deceased man. – I thank you.

I should also like to tell you, before I begin, that Herr Grassi from Munich will talk about Giambattista Vico in the Philosophical Seminar at eight o'clock this evening.³ As you know, we shall celebrate the third centenary of Vico's birth this year. He is one of those thinkers who is held up for admiration

rather than closely read, and he deserves the greatest possible attention as one of the few thinkers who opposed the Cartesianism predominant in his time, and especially in Naples, from the standpoint of a historical awareness. But he did not do this in the spirit of the traditional powers, or in that of obscurantism in whatever form. Rather, he criticized the alleged forefather of the Enlightenment, Descartes, in the spirit of the Enlightenment; and with Spinoza he was one of the first thinkers to have interpreted mythographic material and suchlike things in a grand historical-philosophical style. More precisely, he did this in social terms, and still more precisely in terms of class struggles. A really adequate account of Vico has been lacking in Germany so far. The translation of his main work, as you know, is fragmentary; I do not think there has yet been a complete translation of the *Nuova Scienza* – only the selection edited by Erich Auerbach,⁴ whose introduction, moreover, seems to me extremely problematic. The only substantial contribution on Vico known to me is Horkheimer's study written early in his career; it can be found in the book *Anfänge der bürgerlichen Geschichtsphilosophie*.⁵ I don't know if you are all aware of this book; you should read the chapters on Machiavelli and Vico. Today you will hear much about the question of Vico's philosophical importance from an Italian coming from the tradition of Benedetto Croce,⁶ who first established Vico's real importance in Italy. And if divergent opinions are voiced, I hope the discussion will give an opportunity to do justice to these divergent positions. At any rate, I hope you will attend the lecture in large numbers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the last lecture we dealt in some detail with the question of mediation through society, as it relates to single disciplines and the questions arising within them. I tried to demonstrate this mediation concretely to you by means of a number of models taken from Freud's psychoanalysis – a science which prides itself on its monadological structure, its disregard for society, and is conceived entirely in terms of the individual and against any idea of a special collective mind. I showed you, or tried to show you, how this Freudian psychology nevertheless comes up against social moments at its innermost centres, as if against its will. By contrast, a self-styled 'pure' sociology – to remind you of my earlier point – finally loses all specificity and turns into a form of mere applied statistics precisely through trying to seal itself off from all other disciplines and to be nothing other than sociology, on the basis of the factual content considered appropriate to it. It is a curious fact – I don't know if I have mentioned it already – that a very critical awareness of this situation exists precisely among those statisticians who reflect on their discipline in a truly scientific way – for example, my colleague Professor Blind⁷ at this university. He constantly points out that the prevailing form of statistics, as practised in America, for example, is far too abstract a science, the development of which has been far too little affected by

the questions and conditions specific to sociology. I can only advise you, just because you need statistical tools for your sociological study, to pay special attention to these matters when attending Professor Blind's lectures, for it is here that, in a higher sense, the scientific problems of statistics really begin.

Ladies and Gentlemen, at this point I should like to come back to Max Weber, for whenever one queries the boundaries or frays the edges of sociology, or however one may like to put it, one is generally answered with the authority of Max Weber. Now, Max Weber is unquestionably one of the most important subjects of sociological study, and one needs to be familiar with his *oeuvre* far more widely than just by reading the few fundamental essays on the theory of science, and the studies on the 'spirit of capitalism' and the 'sociology of authority'.⁸ But I should like to point out – and this might help you a little in your study of Weber – that if his work is examined really seriously, things turn out to be far more complicated than first appears. I should like to apply to Weber what I once said of Thomas Mann: that what matters in his work is not what you read in the Baedeker guide:⁹ what matters are those things which contradict his official methodology. If you look at the works of Weber, who came from the historical school of political economy as a pupil of Gustav von Schmoller,¹⁰ and who then insisted on the autonomy of sociology in Germany just as strongly as Durkheim did in France, you will see that he owes the whole richness of his work to his historical material. To be sure, he tried to differentiate his concept of the sociological ideal type from a second concept of the historical ideal type,¹¹ but I don't know if that attempt was particularly successful. I think it is important for you to understand that the sociological ideal types in Weber are in no sense key theoretical categories through which, or through the interrelationships of which, something like a coherent theory of society is to be obtained. Rather, they are merely heuristic instruments, heuristic means, with which the historical material is to be compared. And it is through the comparison with these ideal constructs, which for their part are derived from the historical material by a process of classifying abstraction, that sociological understanding of the historical material, according to Weber, is to be advanced. I believe that the purpose of the ideal types in Weber can only be properly understood if one is clear about this point. As usually happens with concepts which have played a major part in the history of dogma, the concept of the ideal type is given rather lax treatment in the sociological literature. And it is already being said that whenever one works with a highly articulated concept of the kind which occur in typologies and which differ from those of empiricism, one is dealing

with an ideal type. But I believe that, in general, far too little attention is paid to this extremely peculiar structure of the ideal type in Weber: to its specifically heuristic character, the idea that the types actually arise like bubbles from water and then vanish in the same way into nothingness. And for this reason I consider it an index of sociological dilettantism whether the concept of the ideal type is used strictly – that is, whether account is taken of what an ideal type actually is – or whether ideal types are referred to in a lax and indiscriminate way whenever one has to do with a concept which is not a straightforward description of this or that piece of social material. Now there is already in Weber a very deep and unmistakable disjunction between the material, the historical content of his work, and the concepts constructed by subjective abstraction, the ideal types, which are superimposed on it. Moreover, I should like to tell you, in introducing Max Weber today, that in his work these ideal types are essentially modelled, in terms of their structure, on the method of legal definitions. Legal definitions are constituted in a way entirely similar to Weber's ideal types, and jurisprudence was, of course, the discipline originally taught by Weber, apart from historical political economy. And if you read the late works and are astonished by the curious way in which these ideal types are laid down like fixed definitions, you should always bear in mind the procedure used in jurisprudence. This peculiar manner of operating with concepts, or systems or complexes of concepts, as if they had a certain autonomy with regard to the material to which they are applied, a manner so characteristic of Weber's sociology, is a procedure he has in common with jurisprudence. And if I may say this: for me, the difficulty – to be quite blunt – of understanding legal thinking at all has always arisen at this point, from the fact that in this thinking systems of concepts which have been constructed, thought out in a very tangible sense of the term, have taken the place of the real circumstances and the real conditions affecting decisions.

Since we are concerned here with an 'Introduction to Sociology', I am reminded at this point – and this is only seemingly a digression, Ladies and Gentlemen – of one of the motifs which, at least for me, has been decisive in attracting me to sociology and inducing me to practise the discipline. It is the need not to operate with ready-made, thought-out concepts in isolation, but to confront the concepts with that from which they arise, from which norms also arise, and in which the relationship of norm to reality is located – which is, precisely, the interplay of social forces. I believe that this need to escape from mere conceptuality – what I would call detached, self-sufficient conceptuality, as it is found in the systems of theoretical physics and, with far

less legitimacy, in jurisprudence – by reflecting on society, is the simplest and perhaps also the most compelling of the motivations which induce one to take up sociology.

Now there is in Weber, I said, a basic disjunction between the conceptual element, which in Weber's fully developed theory is the ideal type, and the material. This disjunction manifests itself in the fact that the ideal types, at least according to the methodological requirements stated by Weber himself, are really mere instruments which have neither a theoretical location nor any conceptual weight of their own, but only exist so that the material can be structured, on the principles of instrumental, subjective reason, by comparison with them. However, the point to which I would draw your attention here, the point in Max Weber which, as I mentioned earlier, is not to be found in the official guide, is that he himself did not actually adhere to this definition of the ideal type. I believe this gives much cause for thought with regard to the debate over positivism within sociology. I believe that Max Weber's thought, like any other intellectual formation of considerable magnitude, can only be understood by understanding at which points such a formation goes beyond that which it understands itself to be, and which it purports to be. This is standard procedure in understanding philosophical texts; but I would say that it is no less applicable to an understanding of sociological texts of any relevance. Weber had at his disposal an extraordinary wealth of historical material from which to derive his concepts, an abundance that we in our day can only envy, for – I think this has to be stated outright – this kind of abundance of scholarly material has been lost to us in comparison to him. But the fact is that Weber was driven by this very abundance to attribute to the ideal types more substantiality than was really to be expected. I should like to illustrate this by at least one example, taken from the famous section of *Economy and Society*, with which you will undoubtedly concern yourselves, devoted to the 'sociology of authority'. In it he sets out three ideal types of authority:¹² 'rational' or – what shall I call it? – 'legitimate' authority, consonant with the principle of reason, which largely coincides historically with the bourgeois form of authority and is developed from the bourgeois model, although, contrary to many views, Weber traces the origin of this authority back to the feudal system. Then there is 'traditional authority', which corresponds essentially to feudalism, the concept of which was understood in economic terms as the 'traditionalist' economy by Weber's friend Werner Sombart,¹³ who sympathized strongly with him in these endeavours. Finally, there is 'charismatic authority', a form of authority which is understood to mean that the authority of certain figures, certain people, is regarded as legitimized

in some way from above, irrationally. The question of the intrusion of irrational moments into society is, in general, extremely important for Weber, precisely because of his concept of 'means-end rationality',¹⁴ to which it sets a limit. The concept of 'irrational election', taken from Calvinism, plays a decisive role in Weber's sociology of religion, for example.¹⁵ Now, however, the following happens: as an honest scholar Weber takes a closer look at the forms of authority from which he has derived his concept of 'charismatic authority'.¹⁶ Why he introduced this term at all, and what function it had in his work, must be left aside here. The real reason is that he clearly thought that this charismatic form of authority would provide him with something like a corrective to the increasingly ossified bureaucracy of the bourgeois world. In this he very accurately perceived the tendency towards an 'administered world' almost fifty years ago; but he did not see, and at that time perhaps could not see, that the concept of the 'charismatic leader' – referring to the average expectation that orders issued in the name of charisma will actually be obeyed – not only fails to function as a corrective to bureaucratic authority but is particularly prone to becoming merged with bureaucratic authority. This applies both to the leader cult of the fascist state and to that which in the Stalinist system has become known as the cult of personality.

But let us go back to 'charismatic authority'. It looks as if, in coining this term, Weber had simply come up against the fact that charisma of this kind was passed on by inheritance in the form of the divine right of kings, and still earlier by certain hereditary arrangements in primitive societies. You must always keep in mind that, of course, Weber was not an irrationalist in the sense that he regarded charisma as a positive category. He understood it purely descriptively as an opportunity: if people attribute such charisma to another, the recipient has a certain opportunity to have his orders obeyed. Whether he really has charisma is a matter of indifference to this science, which, as we know, makes much show of being value-free. The critical question whether charisma actually exists or not is therefore not posed in this sociology. I cannot abstain from pointing out to you that this indifference has had very dangerous and harmful consequences in certain phenomena which subsequently attached themselves to Weber, consequences which are still felt today. But however that may be, he hit on the fact – and states it quite openly at one point in *Economy and Society* – that, in the long run, the type of 'charismatic authority' has the tendency to pass over into 'traditional authority'.¹⁷ At first this sounds quite innocuous, plausible and rational. But I now ask you to connect this idea to what I told you earlier about the concept of the ideal type in Weber – and his three great types of authority are,

of course, such ideal types. These ideal types were not supposed to have any such thing as a life of their own. If the concept of the ideal type is applied as strictly as it is stated in the essay on categories in Max Weber's *Wissenschaftslehre*,¹⁸ such an ideal type simply cannot have anything like a tendency to pass over into another, since it is something entirely monadological, invented *ad hoc* to subsume certain phenomena. To endow it with such a tendency would be to attribute to it something of the Hegelian substantiality, or objectivity, of the concept, which is precisely what Max Weber, in agreement with the prevailing positivism of the sociology of his time, and of our time as well, argued against. In other words, in looking more closely at his own ideal types he is driven beyond his own definition or postulation of the ideal type as a purely abstract, arbitrary and ephemeral conceptual instrument, in the direction of what in critical theory is referred to as the objective laws of motion. For if there is really such a thing as a tendency, a necessary, immanent tendency, for such an ideal type to transcend itself and pass over into another ideal type, then not only is the monadological, absolutely isolated structure of these ideal types undermined, but something like the concept of a social law of motion is introduced, and with it an objective structure of society, which, of course, is denied in principle by the very nature of Weber's epistemology. This has an extraordinary consequence, which I should like to point out to you in relation to the debate on positivism, which provides a kind of framework for the discussions I am trying to indicate to you in this lecture. This consequence is that even if one operates with concepts defined in a purely instrumental manner, the structured character of the subject matter asserts itself in such a way that something of the objective structure imprints itself on these operationally defined concepts through their own structural determinateness – which, according to the rules of this kind of science, ought not to be the case. At the moment when the positivist conception of science immerses itself in its material, it observes something that I might call a form of objectification within the structure of society itself, something which is antithetical to its conception. Let us suppose that in considering the fate of so-called charismatic leaders it comes across a Mongol prince whose horsemen have followed him in order to conquer the world because they believed there was some numinous power behind him, and it then emerged that this power could be inherited, so that a dynasty grew out of it: that would be an example of such objectification of a concept within the structure of society itself. You must understand why I attach so much importance to this. It is self-evident that proofs of such objectivity in the structure and organization of the subject matter are far more convincing if they are

involuntarily provided by sociologists whose methodological approach is opposed to the one I am advancing here than if I were to demonstrate such laws of motion on the basis of my own premises. And perhaps you will believe me when I say that the sociology of Max Weber is extremely rich in such structures. I have picked out this example because it relates to something as central as authority; and I could give you others. But here I shall just point out that such a connection exists in his work. At exactly this point – in the seemingly ahistorical construction of the ideal types, which are abstracted from history at the expense of precisely those concrete historical conditions under which the various ideal types came into being – the historical moment, which Weber tried to exclude from sociology by constructing it as an ostensibly pure discipline, re-enters sociology. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. This brings us back to the great theme we are concerned with at this moment in this lecture. That the alleged purity of sociology is a far from clear-cut issue has been derived from the structure of Weber's sociology itself, as elaborated by him.

I should now like to ask you – or I should like to ask myself and discuss the matter with you – in what this very peculiar interest in the purity of sociology, or of any discipline, consists. I have to admit that I myself have never really understood this at any time in my life, and I still do not understand it today. I recall that I was able to reach agreement with Max Wertheimer,¹⁹ with whom I was otherwise always terribly at odds for as long as I knew him, on one point: that neither he nor, from an entirely different standpoint, I could believe in such 'little boxes'. As I am aware that thinking in terms of such 'little boxes' is extremely widespread, and no doubt will have a certain attraction for some of you, even though you would not yourselves use the term 'little boxes', I think this question needs to be put in a fundamental way. For example, it repeatedly happens to me that people, particularly those in a subaltern position, who cannot think of anything particularly sensible to say against my work but who don't like its general tendency, say to me: 'Oh yes, but it's a halfway house between philosophy and sociology,' or: 'It dithers between philosophy and music,' 'It's neither pure music nor pure philosophy,' or: 'It's neither pure philosophy nor pure sociology.' And by saying that people think they have said something decisive, without having given any thought to the really decisive question – the one concerning the internal mediation between the disciplines concerned, which have been brought into a certain relationship to each other. At this stage I should just like you to reflect on this matter in principle and to question the dogma with which you have undoubtedly been inoculated by other sciences: that the value of a discipline is essentially determined

by whether it is pure, that is, whether it is based more-or-less exclusively on quite specific material and categories, without assimilating any others. Heaven forbid that I should do this as an apology for my own writings, which should be left completely on one side; I do so because of the curious taboo attaching to the so-called purity of disciplines. I believe I have already shown you in detail that a discipline such as sociology can only have any meaning and usefulness if it is related to material which cannot be regarded as purely sociological.

On this point psychoanalysts would have a great deal to say. One could talk of the virginity complex, for example, which is transferred to the sciences when it has nowhere else to let off steam, and which, with its fear of contact, can at least demand that no science be contaminated by any other. But I do not wish to pursue this psychological dimension further here, although it is my opinion that if anyone had the idea of undertaking something like a psychoanalysis of the prevailing scientific habits, some astonishing things would come to light which would contribute a great deal to the critique of the dominant scientific system. I tried something similar with the concept of pedantry in my introduction to Durkheim's study on 'Sociology and Philosophy'.²⁰ But that was only a kind of model. I believe – and I am here addressing those of you with psychoanalytic interests – that this can be taken much further than I did in that introduction. But here, too, certain psychologically repressive tendencies, which in psychoanalysis would be referred to as such, go together, in a way which will not be altogether surprising to you or to me, with repressive tendencies in the social sphere; and I should now like to consider these.

The first benefit of the ideal of scientific purity, in the sense of a safe, defining demarcation between one discipline and all others, no matter how arbitrary that demarcation may be, is that if such a science is pure and cannot therefore be interpreted as intersecting other disciplines, it can be drawn on the map of the established sciences. Sociology is one of the 'latecomer' sciences which have been inscribed relatively late in the cosmos of sciences. Such sciences, which lack a tradition such as that of the medieval scientific system, have a special need to prove their scientific credentials, and therefore manifest an exaggerated striving to demonstrate their purity, their autonomy, and with this autonomy their right to exist. For they think they can only argue their own right to exist if they are not overlapped by other sciences. They want to establish sociology as a discipline like any other, without reflecting that a critique of the compartmentalization and the division of labour operating within the sciences is the proper concern of precisely this discipline – indeed, they cannot affirm that compartmentalization strictly enough. I should mention here the

distinction between the 'scientific' and the 'prescientific' which has become very popular among sociologists lately. I do not wish, of course, to defend the prescientific when it involves naïve, uncontrolled observation or a no less naïve, uncontrolled and aimless manner of thinking. But I do believe that the idea that so-called prescientific thinking is something wholly different to scientific thinking is directly refuted by the actual experiences and procedures of productive scientific work. Unless prescientific interests or extra-scientific concepts are imported into every scientific sociological investigation, then scientific interests and concepts are entirely lacking as well. Equally, so-called prescientific experience is also, of course, permeated by critical motifs which benefit scientific thinking. In saying this I want only to warn you against adopting a certain type of scientific posture which is not unknown to me and can manifest itself somewhat as follows: you are able to sit down at a *Caféhaus* table – I'm thinking of Vienna now – with someone with whom you can talk about every possible intellectual, social and political issue and who has thoroughly free, reasonable and critical views. But the moment he metaphorically puts on his academic gown – I don't think too many people are inclined to put it on literally nowadays – he immediately succumbs to what Habermas has called *restringierte Erfahrung* (restricted experience).²¹ He will now only entertain views so limited and narrow that they bear no comparison with his so-called prescientific views – what he knows when you talk to him normally – and are entirely lacking in weight. In the next lecture I want to examine this whole problematic of so-called 'pure' sociology on a far more fundamental level, in terms of its underlying principles.

LECTURE FIFTEEN

4 July 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To help me plan the rest of my lectures I would like to find out whether most of you intend to be here on Tuesday 16th. If you are still here I shall give the lecture. But if only a small minority will be here [*Laughter*] – I mean minority in the quantitative sense, not the qualitative – then I won't give the lecture on that Tuesday. Could I ask which of you will still be here on Tuesday 16th? And now the cross-check, please. Well, this is really a decision worthy of Solomon. It looks roughly 50:50. Now, supposing I did not give a lecture on that Tuesday, would there be a violent protest? [*Laughter*] So if I do give the lecture, it seems to me the protest would actually be more violent. [*Laughter*] As far as my musical ear allows me to make such a judgement, it would be that I should give the lecture, unless you express the very definite wish that I should lecture on the last Tuesday of the semester. [*Hissing*] Well, now I really am like the donkey caught between two piles of hay. Just look what a pass authority has come to! [*Laughter*] Anyway, we can still see how things turn out next week.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the problem of the so-called demarcation of sociology from the other sciences, and the place of sociology within science, has a somewhat more general aspect that I think we should now look into more deeply. It concerns the problem of the fetishization of science. A conception, like the one I mentioned to you, of a sociology which seeks to be nothing other than sociology¹ is a fetishistic conception. It would be, incidentally, a very rewarding task for the so-called sociology of education – and I believe the sociology of

education gives far too little attention to such matters – to say something about the concept of fetishism in science. In this context I understand fetishism in science to mean that science, with its specific form of argumentation and its immanent methods, becomes an end in itself, without any relation to its subject matter. However, science is not an autonomous formation in the same sense as the other sphere of intellectual activity, art, at least as it has traditionally regarded itself, although it should be added that the question of the autonomy or the heteronomy of art is itself a dialectical problem of the first importance. That is to say that, in the end, science has its *terminus ad quem*, its justification, only in affording insights which extend beyond science, which are not exhausted within the corpus of the sciences. I am well aware that this is not, in general, a simple problem, and that in the present situation where there is a crisis in the sciences and the universities – which are difficult to separate – one should not throw out the baby with the bath-water. There is no doubt – and I think I have already drawn attention to this – that progress in the sciences has been made precisely through the development of its immanent methods, through a certain degree of fetishism. Nor is this true only of the natural sciences, although it is most obvious in them. However, I believe – and this seems to me especially important for the *topos noetikos* of sociology – that in face of this whole complex sociology occupies a rather special position. It does so because concepts such as reification and fetishization, and questions like the one concerning the status of mind within reality – in other words, what in the broadest sense, and indeed too broadly, is termed the problem of ideology – are dealt with by sociology in any case. But if sociology simply takes over the self-sufficiency of the other science-types, without incorporating a manner of reflecting both on itself and on its relationship to its subject matter, it will really suffer from deformation phenomena of the kind which Habermas referred to as ‘restricted experience’; and in this phase of self-reflection sociology really does want to go beyond that. If I were to try to define the difference between the concept of sociology we have in mind in the Frankfurt School and the prevailing concept, it would be that ours does not succumb to this fetishism. I do not think I need to tell you that I am not thinking here of anything pragmatic, such as the direct applicability of its results. On the contrary, if you take an overview of sociological science as it exists today, it emerges that the very belief in the self-sufficiency of its methods and in the absolute autonomy of sociology accords extremely well with its applicability to all kinds of particular, soluble problems within society. By contrast, the non-fetishistic type of sociology relates entirely to areas of thought which, while they

have a practical purpose in that they aim finally at the transformation of structures, are much less able to be translated into directly practical demands than is the case with the usual methods of sociology, which are defined in terms of a strict division of labour. It is interesting, all the same, that although sociology today is incessantly solving practical problems, it has arrived at this fetishism primarily through its desire to cleanse itself of any suspicion of irresponsible grandiosity or utopian aspirations to change the world. This self-restriction of sociology, in the sense I have explained to you, has thus been apologetic in nature: sociology has attempted to secure its position within established academic science by demonstrating that it, too, is such a science. Yet precisely by relating itself to the proper location of science, and thereby reflecting on science, it is not such a science, but something qualitatively different. Now this establishment of sociology as a separate discipline has had a very curious consequence which we can observe in changing forms throughout the recent history of sociology. On one hand, it has sought to be a separate science on the model of the natural sciences – which, of course, have been constituted as a means of dominating nature, and all the categories of which can be defined as forms of the dominance of nature. But, on the other hand, sociology, provided it is not utterly ‘restricted’, has as its general object – which also, if you like, includes its own subject – society. This has given rise to the bizarre situation, which reappears constantly in the most diverse forms, that sociology lays claim to a dominance over society analogous to that of the natural sciences over nature. This motif, if you will, can already be observed in Plato in the idea of the philosopher-kings.² For you should not forget that in Plato the metaphysical categories, that is, the doctrine of the Ideas, and the theory of society are in no way distinguished. Plato’s doctrine is still thoroughly archaic in the sense that it draws no distinction between philosophy as a question about being and philosophy as a question about society. And one of the great hinges of Plato’s philosophy – if I may call it that – is its attempt to derive its notions of a more-or-less ‘organicistic’ yet at the same time hierarchical structure of society from the three spiritual capacities of human beings³ which he posited, and thus, finally, from the doctrine of Ideas itself. It may be assumed, however, without lapsing into crude sociology, that the Ideas with which Plato’s theory of the state is concerned are projections of social experience on to the heaven of the Ideas, from where they had to be brought back down to the earth in which they had their origin. I do not wish to give you a full historical overview of social thought’s claim to dominance. In Plato it takes the form that philosophers, as those who are supposed to recognize and survey

from above the nature of the division of labour and thus the nature of the individual functions of people, should for that reason be kings. You find this idea again – surprisingly in such a sworn anti-Platonist – in Auguste Comte, in his quite open claim that the control and arrangement of society were the province of sociology.⁴ And you can find similar doctrines, finally, right up to the most recent past, in numerous theorems of my former colleague Karl Mannheim, for example, as in his whole idea of the ‘free-floating intellectuals’,⁵ who were supposed to be capable of a higher degree of objectivity than all others because they had no specific position with regard to class or interests; the same claim is implicit in his doctrine. The later Mannheim, in his English period, explicitly adopted a theory of elites⁶ of a distinctly authoritarian kind, with regard to which theory it must doubtless be assumed that those who controlled the elites, those who were in charge of deciding who controlled society, were, for Mannheim, the sociologists. Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not know whether the development of sociology into a mass subject has anything to do with this latent claim to dominance; I do not regard it as impossible. At any rate, I believe that if sociology is to live up to the demand I have referred to as reflection, or self-reflection, it will have to offer critical resistance to this idea that it should be the controlling authority within society. From precisely a sociological point of view, sociology’s claim to dominance over society is untenable. For this claim presupposes directly – from within the existing conditions of power – that a group which is defined solely in terms of intellect, and even solely in terms of the intellectual division of labour, as sociologists are supposed to be, has a right to social control on the grounds that – actually or supposedly, and in general I would say only supposedly – it knows better than the others. The error in thinking – for it is such an error, which in sociologists is rather hard to comprehend – lies in the fact that this allegedly or really adequate consciousness, of the kind that Mannheim had in mind in his perspectivism, is equated directly with power. In this context it is very striking – and it has always surprised me how little this has been studied – that Comte, who wanted to found sociology as a pure science of society and to whom all these fetishistic notions of sociology as a science really date back, never took account of the fact that he himself, if I can express it rather bluntly, was not really a sociologist. He was an intellectual historian or a metaphysician of mind, who – as has been demonstrated in detail in Negt’s dissertation⁷ – was by no means so different to Hegel with regard to these matters as might have been expected in view of their basic positions as an extreme metaphysician, on one hand, and extreme anti-metaphysician, on the other.

I would mention in passing that, seen from a distance, theoretical doctrines produced at the same time – whether social or philosophical – very often differ far less from each other than they would appear to according to their explicit content. The reason is that the whole structure of the society from which they are sprung, and the whole temper and condition of the mind which is stored up in them, outweigh their ostensible positions. To illustrate this quite simply, it is very peculiar that the stages or ‘states’⁸ into which Comte divided the history of humanity are really phases of the mind: the theological, the metaphysical and the positive stage. All these refer to intellectual or spiritual phenomena: to religion; to speculative and, above all, rationalist philosophy and then to a critical and, especially, a critical-sensulist philosophy; and finally to science conceived in more-or-less technocratic terms. By contrast, reflection on the social conditions of these real or supposed ‘stages’, on the connection between feudalism and Christian theology or between the early-bourgeois phase and metaphysical thinking, is quite lacking in Comte’s work. He is, I would say, far less sociological than one might suppose. And a decisive advance that Herbert Spencer made over Comte was to have derived these developmental phases from the real needs of life, from the demands of self-preservation, instead of defining them as mere ‘stages’ of the mind. This is connected in a very positive sense to Spencer’s so-called ‘naturalism’, his conception of humankind as a species developing according to natural laws,⁹ whereas in Comte the ‘stages’, and thus all the laws he states, are complete abstractions from the social conditions and forces which may manifest themselves in these ‘stages’.

Today this claim for dominance by sociology is stirring again, although in a different form to the one it took in Comte, and I can imagine that there is something very attractive in this claim, and also in the elitist pretensions of sociology. In saying this I am only trying to incite you to reflect on the problems of the discipline to which you are being introduced, and on the problems posed by your own relationship to that discipline. For what more can one do in such a lecture, and indeed, what more does an introductory lecture really need to do? After all, sociology, especially in its American form, has shown a considerable ability to control social situations and to solve all kinds of so-called social problems by means of scientific knowledge. I would here remind those of you who are interested in business sociology of the famous Hawthorne investigation,¹⁰ which to an extent was a critique of the Taylorism predominant in American industrial production, that is, the totally rationalized work process associated with the idea of the assembly line or the conveyor belt. This report, known as the Mayo study, demonstrated that the productivity

of labour does not rise simply with rationalization, as had been assumed up to then. This was later confirmed with great mathematical precision, above all by Scottish studies. It was shown that threshold values exist; when the technical rationalization of labour is pushed beyond a certain level it becomes regressive: productivity declines. This led to the inclusion of the human factor in considerations about efficiency. Through these sociological studies a social structure was arrived at, the so-called 'informal' group,¹¹ which cannot be derived from the conditions of rationalization itself, and which contributes to raising productivity above this threshold value.

In this connection I would like to point to a very fundamental principle – the function possessed by so-called irrational institutions, such as the family, the church and the army, in so-called rational bourgeois society. These irrational institutions are generally regarded, especially by Anglo-Saxon sociology, as rudiments, remnants of archaic phases. Spencer, for example, believed that while the whole sphere of the military¹² was a necessary condition for the original integration of social formations, it had been superseded by the sphere of industry, of rational work based on the division of labour, and was thus redundant. And the very interesting American sociologist Thorstein Veblen, whose *Theory of the Leisure Class* I would, incidentally, recommend very warmly to you as a highly unorthodox and critical book, finally goes so far as to characterize all the forms and institutions of authority in rational society as rudimentary 'archaic traits', relics which have already been rendered obsolete by the development of productive forces and of human beings themselves.¹³ Ladies and Gentlemen, I can do no more than alert you to the problem here – but I believe this view is wrong. And I believe that one can only do justice to the problematic of present-day society by looking more deeply into these questions, and thinking more penetratingly about them, than is done within this whole tradition. The thinkers whose names I have mentioned were all fundamentally convinced of the rationality of bourgeois society. That is to say that they regarded the rationality of causal-mechanical thinking, of the kind which governs production within bourgeois society, as the key by means of which society itself, and the timeliness of developments within it, could be explained. In taking this view they entirely overlooked the immense, autonomous role played by the relations of production. Or – to put it in a way which exactly matches the problematic I am talking of at this moment – they overlooked the fact that the much-vaunted rationality of bourgeois society, all that which is meant by the terms scientific age, scientific society or industrial society, is in reality irrational. (The concept of the industrial society, incidentally, is really no more than an extension

of the old Comtian concept of the positive, or scientific, phase.) By calling this society irrational I mean that if the purpose of society as a whole is taken to be the preservation and the unfettering of the people of which it is composed, then the way in which this society continues to be arranged runs counter to its own purpose, its *raison d'être*, its *ratio*. Once this has been perceived the so-called irrational institutions themselves take on a function, and the survival of irrational moments in society can be derived from the social structure itself. I would say that this derivation of the seemingly anachronistic irrationality of society from the social structure is currently the primary task to be performed by a proper sociology. In our society it appears that the irrationality of the arrangement of this society is manifesting itself in countless moments – I'm using the term 'moments' here in the sense of aspects, not temporal units. For example, certain forms of production – let's take agrarian production, especially small and medium-sized farms – are no longer viable under the present conditions of production. It can be said that a permanent agrarian crisis has existed for perhaps 150 years, and has merely been interrupted by the 'blessing' of periodic wars and famines. This means, however, that such sectors can only survive through irrational institutions like the family, through a kind of work in which the workers do not receive the full return for their labour, but are exploited once again within their closest association, which for this reason is called the germ-cell of society. It means, therefore, that the irrational conditions of society can only be maintained through the survival of these irrational functions. I have demonstrated the irrationality of institutions by the example of the family. I could, no doubt, also demonstrate it by the example of armies and war expenditure, which have the function of guaranteeing the functioning of the system in purely economic terms while simultaneously promoting its annihilation. I could demonstrate it similarly by examining the function of the churches. This irrationality of institutions, and the irrational moments in our society, are to be understood only as functions of continuing irrationality. While the means used by society are rational, this rationality of the means is really – to borrow Max Weber's term – only a means-end rationality, that is, one which obtains between the set ends and the means used to achieve them, without having any relation to the real end or purpose of society, which is the preservation of the species as a whole in a way conferring fulfilment and happiness. That is the reason not only why irrationalities survive, but why they reproduce themselves even further. And, incidentally, it is the deepest explanation why so-called psychological moments and socio-psychological moments have such importance in this society. I believe

that this objective derivation of irrationality, or, if you like, the rational derivation of the irrational, should be a centrepiece of sociological work today.

I shall apply this, Ladies and Gentlemen, to what I have told you about sociology's claims to authority. I said that sociology owes its present claim to authority to its ability to control certain situations. Take the example I gave you: the Hawthorne investigation and the cult of the so-called 'small irrational group' to which it gave rise – a kind of synthetic family conjured up within the sphere of work, which, as we know, had otherwise distanced itself from the family even at the local level. You will see straight away that these socio-psychological or sociological factors, which escape pure economic calculability, have now, nevertheless, been brought within the calculation. They, too, contribute to heightening the productivity of labour and are thus integrated into the dominant economic activity with all its irrationality. As a result, people talk of 'cow sociology' in this context even in America. This term, used widely in the United States, has the following meaning. There is in that country a famous advert for the Borden milk monopoly or oligopoly. Or there was such an advert: I have been away from America too long to know if it still exists, but I expect it does; those of you who are just back from the States can correct me if I'm wrong. The advert shows the famous cow Elsie,¹⁴ the Borden cow, who appears on countless billboards and leads an uncommonly happy family life with her wedded spouse Elmer. This is made clear in great detail, to emphasize how good a milk must be if it comes from a family situation in the cow community where cows are looked after so well. Now, I don't think I need to spell out to you in what way this idea is applicable to the kind of sociology to which I have just referred.

But, to be serious, what I would now like to say to you is that the authority which sociology as a science is claiming over society today is in principle of this kind. That is to say that the idea of a dominance of such sectors within existing society is being widened into the idea of a sociological dominance of society as a whole. This has about it something of the illusion of classlessness that I mentioned before in connection with Mannheim's doctrine of a 'free-floating intelligentsia' elevated above the classes. The old, purely sociological claim to authority, as put forward more or less explicitly by established sociology, does not aim to bring about a rational society emerging from its own potentialities and its own immanent tendencies. It aims to exert a rational, which in this context means a separate, control over society from above. If I may put this in a very pointed way, I could say that, in this conception of a control of society by sociology,

rationalization has taken the place of rationality. And there are not a few socialists who share this idea, believing that socialism amounts to the elimination of avoidable costs, the simple removal of coefficients of friction for the sake of the smooth running of the vast production machinery of capitalism, without reflecting on the relationship of living human beings to this machinery. It might be said that in this demand for control over society which is latent within it, sociology is really nothing other than an agency of control conforming to the technocratic ideal, but which is now being extended beyond the mere outward arrangement of the production apparatus to penetrate the communal life of human beings and finally the consciousness and the unconscious of human beings. This technocratization of the sociological ideal applies all the more, the more the so-called 'pure' sociology that we are discussing grows accustomed to operating a technology of its own. For the very concept of technology contains an ineradicable moment of dominance over nature, and as soon as this idea of technology as dominance over nature is applied directly and without reflection to human beings, the notion of dominance over nature is transferred just as directly to human beings.

I think that the fundamental considerations I have presented to you today will be enough to make clear why there can be no sociological privilege in the sense that, just because we have the opportunity to claim a kind of elitist leadership in society, we therefore have the right to do so. And it is only a social opportunity – we should not deceive ourselves about that. Our task is to criticize and disintegrate concepts such as elitist leadership – even one exercised by intellectuals – and not to extend our position by fetishizing it. The best we can hope for from ourselves is that we may be granted a certain opportunity to come of age through the subject we study, and the freedom we have to study it. The misplaced dominance of present-day sociology lies in the fact that the technology of situations which are controllable by science, and therefore the reified relationship embodied in such situations, is transferred to society, which ought to be the subject of all those concepts. And that, Ladies and Gentlemen, is really the difference between what I would call the theory of society in a strong sense, and the narrower, the truly narrow concept of sociology – Thank you.

LECTURE SIXTEEN

9 July 1968

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the impression that the air-conditioning is not working again. I don't know if you have the same impression. If so, I should be grateful if someone would take the matter up with the building administration. On a day like this, in heat like this, collecting one's thoughts is an almost impossible task. It just can't be done.

I have the feeling, Ladies and Gentlemen, that at the end of the last lecture I pushed ahead rather quickly to bring an idea to a conclusion. So I would just like to repeat the concluding point I made, and attach to it a reflection which bears on some fundamental principles. I tried to show you that sociology, in its claim to be able to control society, exerts the wrong kind of authority. Its error lies in trying to extend the possibility of a scientific control of individual social situations – as when sociological findings contribute to improving the psychological conditions of work in a way which raises productivity – to the point where it becomes a control of society as a whole. This aspiration has asserted itself more or less openly, if only in individual sectors, rather than in the comprehensive way we find in Comte. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am aware that one might ask in response to this – on the basis of common sense, not dialectical reflection and logic – why methods which really work quite well in solving social problems on a small scale, in micro-sectors, should not be extended and applied finally to society as a whole? I sometimes anticipate such objections, since I have the feeling that they might come from you

rather less than they should, and ideas gain their depth by chafing against each other. I believe the question I have just posed is of such central relevance to the position of sociology today that – if I am to give you a serious introduction to the discipline – I owe you an answer to it. Sociology is a very curious discipline in one respect which has not often been emphasized: it has been concluded that in sociology, unlike the natural sciences, it is possible to understand its object from within. This idea has been put forward by Freyer in particular.¹ I would like to express it in the language of philosophy, for I cannot properly introduce you to sociology while forgetting philosophy – that is in the nature of the kind of sociology I am presenting to you. Stated in philosophical terms, the problem implicit in the above proposition is none other than that sociology is the science which, as the subject, simultaneously has itself as its object. That is to say that the subject – and the ideal subject of science is, finally, society as a whole, which performs the act of knowing – really owns nothing other than society.² I have repeatedly expressed the idea in this lesson – I mean lecture [*Speaker and audience laugh*] – that sociology consists essentially of the reflection of science upon itself. That society is both its subject and its object was already implicit in that idea. But however straightforward this may sound, it actually conceals the central problem, the central difficulty, of sociology itself. For in the society in which we live a subject comprising the whole of society does not exist. Subject and object diverge in this society, and, to an unprecedented degree, living people are the objects of social processes which, in their turn, are composed of people. If you consider this for a moment, you realize that the difficulty lies in the fact that in the sociological perspective the social subject, or society as subject, is treated as if it were indeed identical with society as object. This happens because the concept of sociology which I am discussing critically with you here – a technocratic approach which is extended to human beings – is adopted in such an all-embracing way. The objectifying, reifying methods of sociology are applied to society as a subject, whereas these reifying methods ought, of course, to stop short at the living subject. My lectures in this semester comprise a catalogue and a critique of the basic ideas of positivist sociology. And if I am constantly reproaching that kind of sociology with being an expression of a reified consciousness, it is only now that you can understand this contention in the strict sense in which it is meant. My criticism is that as soon as sociology is applied to society as a whole – which ought to be a subject – then, by its internal logic, it turns society into an object; and that in doing so – in the act of cognition, as it were – it repeats the processes of reification which, for their part, are already

implicit in the logic of the commodity character which is spreading throughout society. I would say that the true application of a critical, dialectical theory of society consists precisely in not equating society as subject with society as object. For two reasons: on one hand, because society as object – that is, the social process – is not yet by any means a subject, or free, or autonomous; on the other, because society as subject, or as potentially a subject – that is, conceived as a self-determining, mature society which is also liberated in terms of its content – resists and is incompatible with precisely the objectifying, reifying kind of thinking which is inflicted on it by the established sociological methods.

It's now almost thirty years since Paul Lazarsfeld published an article in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (or rather in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences* which took over from the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* during the war) which actually – and this is very curious – expressed the problem I am discussing here, although he would certainly have rejected the formulations I have used. Lazarsfeld was an extreme exponent of positivist sociology, and especially of empirical social research, and because of these theoretical disagreements I had the most violent collisions with him in the three years of our collaboration.³ His article is called: 'Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research'.⁴ In the course of the arguments carried on between him on one side and Horkheimer and myself on the other, he hit on the idea that in these disputes, particularly as regards communications research, two incompatible and irreconcilable conceptions of sociology were at work. One of them, which he called 'administrative research', identified and analysed social facts and made them available to this or that administrative agency; the other was critical research into communications. However, the real difference between them does not lie in the goals they pursue, but – one might almost say – in the fact that one treats human beings as objects – for example, objects of the manipulation of the culture industry, which wants to find out how to arrange its programmes so that they sell as well as possible – while the other, to which we subscribe, holds fast to the potential of society as subject, and to the belief that, in all its manifestations, society should be measured critically against the concept of its own subjectivity. If I have criticized sociology for its pretension to authority, I could also express that by saying that this is nothing other than an administrative pretension which has become all-embracing, and that implicit in precisely the ideal of total administration – despite the apparent neutrality of this kind of sociology – is something which is anything but neutral. I should like to close these reflections with that observation.

The problem I am concerned with here has received a certain attention in Germany, too, and even outside our school sociologists have tried to take account of these matters. For example, René König has attempted – perhaps he saw this as a kind of concession to the ‘Frankfurt people’ – to differentiate between sociology and social philosophy.⁵ About this it should simply be said that, in doing so, he has naïvely taken over the old division of labour between philosophy and the individual sciences, without taking note of the special situation of sociology which I have pointed out to you: that it is the discipline whose object is necessarily, and inherently, its subject. He has overlooked the fact that this subject-character of the object brings about, of its own accord, those modifications which we try to apply in our kind of sociology, and which have found their expression, however inadequately, in the dialectical method of sociology. Now, I’m not a fetishist with regard to names, and still less with regard to concepts couched in the nomenclature of academic whimsy. If I refused to accept König’s distinction at the outset and continue to do so, it is not only because, for the reasons I have just given you, I regard it as intrinsically impossible to separate the two moments he would like to keep apart. It is also because, in the society in which we live – and in keeping with an experience which has been confirmed so often that I should like to call it a sociological law – distinctions which appear merely formal when they arise have a tendency to turn into distinctions of content. If one is told in any context that a hierarchical distinction of some kind is merely a matter of form and is of no consequence, one can be almost certain that in reality it is of extreme consequence. That is true to an extraordinary degree, and for very deep reasons – namely because the rational structure of bureaucracy asserts itself essentially through formal, and particularly formal-legal, mechanisms. For example – to put it quite bluntly – if one were to accept the distinction between sociology and social philosophy, then a distinction according to the same criterion would be adopted by the large foundations, by research associations, the Volkswagen Foundation or whoever else; and research projects – which, in the case of collective, empirical projects, are, as we know, very expensive – would be allocated to sociology, while everything else would be classed as philosophy. And if research projects were set up from a standpoint which, in terms of this division of labour, were defined as social philosophy, no money would be available for them. I think it is useful for you to be aware how distinctions which seem to be merely methodological or epistemological impinge quite directly on the practical conduct of these disciplines. I am taking this as an opportunity to point out to you that under the prevailing concept of ‘administrative research’,

sociology, or empirical sociology, has been developed in an extremely one-sided way. Its potential to gather useful information has been fostered, while all the aspects of empirical social research which have critical implications have been neglected to a quite extraordinary degree. These critical implications concern social theses and assertions, such as those of the affluent society, or the so-called 'social partnership', or the alleged pluralism of society – to mention a few of the favourite theses – which might be subjected to actual empirical investigation. Not the least of the objectives pursued by the Institut für Sozialforschung has been to attempt, within the modest limits set by financial considerations, to carry out at least a number of model studies of an empirical kind, from which it is seen that empirical methods can be functionally redirected [*umfunktioniert*] – to use that expression – to provide a critical, empirical perception of society, albeit one which presupposes theory.

Lurking behind the problems I have been talking about all this time is something much deeper and more difficult. It is the objective ideological function which the application of a strict academic division of labour has with regard to sociology. What I have in mind here might perhaps be expressed in terms of the following thesis: the strict moats dug between the differentiated scientific disciplines cause the intrinsic interest of these disciplines to disappear; and this interest cannot be restored by retrospective cooperation or integration – for example, by mutually explaining findings or discovering formal agreements between structures identified, say, by sociology and economics. This is simply because something secondary, assembled after the event from factors (as they're called), is made to appear as what is decisive and concrete; and the purpose of science, ultimately – as the positivists in particular ought to admit – is to engage with social concreteness, and not to gratify itself with schematic classifications.

I should like to illustrate this by citing a problem which I consider to be just as relevant to the general situation of sociology, and to the concept of sociology, as the moments I have drawn to your attention so far in this lecture. This is the relationship of sociology to what was earlier called political economy [*Nationalökonomie*] and is now – for interesting reasons about which much could be said – generally referred to as economics [*Volkswirtschaftslehre*]. This is really the problem of political economy itself. Of the demands put forward by students with regard to university reform, the most urgent, in my opinion, is for the fullest possible development of political economy. This is now especially urgent since the other very important demand at our university and in our Department, for the establishment of a Chair of Psychoanalysis (to which I shall come back later), has now

been met by the appointment of Professor Mitscherlich.⁶ Perhaps I might add, without in the least wishing to usurp your role or give you avuncular advice on your endeavours, that it seems to me in general that the student movement, as far as it can be seen as an internal university matter, operates most fruitfully when it extends to questions and demands concerning the content of disciplines, rather than when it is institutionally orientated, as seems to be largely the case at present; in this, the movement seems to me to run a certain risk of adaptation to the prevailing institutionalism. I believe, therefore, that the concern should be less with procedural rules, orders of business, problems of delegation and suchlike, than with the content of the disciplines themselves, where the scope for critique – heaven knows – is wide enough.

My thesis is quite simply that the strict division between economics and sociology, the consequence of which is unquestionably to dismiss the Marxian theory *ante portas*, causes the decisive social interests of both disciplines to disappear; and that precisely through this separation they both fail to assert their real interests, what really matters in them. I am speaking here in purely cognitive, not practical, terms; at this moment I am talking only of the perception of scientific structures, although this problem, by its own logic, is hard to separate from problems of praxis. The famous sociology which, in Scheuch's dictum, 'seeks to be nothing but sociology',⁷ restricts itself to opinions and preferences or, at most, to interpersonal relationships, social forms, institutions, power relationships and conflicts. In this it disregards that which is the actual *raison d'être* of all these things – things, I call them; I mean, all these moments – and by which alone these moments can actually be measured. For it disregards the process of the real self-preservation of human society; it disregards the fact that this whole, gigantic social process held together by exchange can finally have no other purpose than to guarantee and keep in motion, first of all on the material level, the life of the whole human species at the cultural standard which it has attained. If one were to make this point, one would be told at once by the sociologists: 'Well now, we as sociologists really cannot concern ourselves with such questions of the economic survival of a nation or, for that matter, of humankind; those are really matters which have to do with economics. The specifically sociological aspect of all this is the interpersonal element, without regard to such economic processes.' In other words, sociology – and this is really the gravest objection that can be made to what is generally called sociology – disregards the social production and reproduction of the life of society as a whole. And if anything is a social relationship, it is precisely that totality. But as soon as one

puts forward such a point of view one is promptly accused of economism.

In Max Weber, it must be said – despite his famous attack on the Marxian superstructure–base theory in his study on the Protestant ethic⁸ – the problem of the connection between sociology and economics was at least regarded as a problem. It is, finally, not by accident that his not-quite-finished *magnum opus* is called *Economy and Society*, and does thus pose the question of the interrelatedness and reciprocal influence of these two entities, which, admittedly, in keeping with the sociological schema, are already conceived as separate. What has now occurred in sociology – against Weber – is that this connection between economy and society, which clearly appeared to him to be the central sociological problem, has been excluded from scientific sociology in the narrower sense; that sociology – if you look at sociological literature in general – no longer pays any attention to it; and that even sociologists as socially critical as the late C. Wright Mills are finally beholden to what I might call the ruling sociology, in that they operate first of all with concepts such as power, elite and personal control of the apparatus of production,⁹ without involving themselves – or not very deeply – in an analysis of the economic processes themselves. As for economics itself, however, it will have no truck with anything – whether it be history, sociology or even philosophy – which does not take place strictly within the context of the developed market economy and which cannot be calculated, mathematized, according to the schemata of current market relationships; those disciplines are accused, for example, of presenting a purely sociological theory of class. Because this material is rejected by both disciplines, the decisive fact is expelled from economics as well: the fact that the economic relationships between people, though ostensibly of a purely economic, calculable nature, are in reality nothing but congealed interpersonal relationships. Sociology, on the other hand, in concerning itself only with relationships between people without paying too much attention to their objectified economic form, acts as if everything really depended on these interpersonal relationships or even on the opportunities open to social actions, and not on those mechanisms. What is lost in the gap between them – and this gap is to be understood not topologically, but as something really missing from the thought of both disciplines – is exactly that which was once referred to by the term ‘political economy’. What thus disappears from sociology is not only the decisive element whereby social activity is able to maintain itself at all, but also knowledge of how it maintains itself, with what sacrifices, threats and also with what potentialities for good – in other words, what is lost is precisely what

matters, the core, one might say, of the social process. Not to mention the fact that the question of the relationship of economy to society, still as urgent as ever, vanishes from sociology. This question is directly connected to the further question how far present society is still an exchange society and how far it is no longer that. And on this latter question, in a way I hardly need to explain to you, any prognosis regarding allegedly political or social questions largely depends. The question, Ladies and Gentlemen – to state the matter bluntly – the question regarding the tendency of capital, the concentration of capital, which is always brushed aside with far-fetched arguments within economics, is not only a question of economic calculation. Nor is it only a question which determines the structure of our society down to the level, I would almost say, of the most delicate subjective behaviour. It is also the question on which the development of society, and of specifically social forms, decisively depends. And if this question is not addressed, the whole of sociology is really neutralized in advance in face of the destiny confronting humankind. On the other hand, it must be remembered that what is called for is not only the assimilation of the mathematized market economy into sociology; economics, in its turn, is called upon to do precisely what it fails to do: to translate the economic laws back into congealed human relationships. The fact that there is a point or area of indifference between economics and sociology is no doubt the reason why Marx produced his curious formulation: ‘political economy’. It is curious because, firstly, as some of you will know, Marx consigned the whole sphere of politics to ideology. But there is something very ambivalent about even the theory of politics as ideology. On one hand, politics as the expression of existing power relationships is ideological in that it behaves as if it were a kind of technique or procedure independent of the social power relationships; on the other, however, politics, or the political sphere, also contains the possibility, the potential, for social change. It might be said, therefore, to put this, too, in dialectical terms, that politics is and at the same time is not ideology. I should like to add here, incidentally, that Marx had a violent aversion to the word sociology, an aversion that may have been connected to his very justified distaste for Auguste Comte, on whom he pronounced the most annihilating judgement.¹⁰ If this distaste is analysed more closely it is seen to be bound up with the fact that the reifying, merely contemplative posture of sociology towards society was repugnant to him, and that he somehow divined that to set up a science of society like any other science involved an ideological displacement which was impossible. For, as I mentioned earlier, society is really not an object but a subject. But he also took account of the very ambiguous

situation regarding social science, in that while he despised sociology as the discipline which was becoming established at that time, and poured scorn on the word, he nevertheless devoted the major part of his own mature work to what can only be called theoretical national economy. I leave open the question whether, in this work, the reduction of economic connections to reified relationships was at every moment apparent to him, or whether he, too, had to pay his tribute to reifying science, a tribute from which, probably, no-one who concerns himself with science is exempt. One has always to choose, it may be said, between the reifying scientific consciousness and, if you like, amateurish unstructured thinking; and, reality being as it is, one is likely to find it very hard to pass beyond that contradiction.

I should add that the point here is not that the dividing lines between the disciplines are drawn too heavily; I am thinking of something far more definite and radical. I believe that the separation we are concerned with not only offends against this or that border crossing, which is unavoidable in organized thought, and would not cost me any tears. I have in mind something much more serious: the fact that the strict division between economics and sociology sets aside the really central interests of both disciplines. As a result, both fail to assert these central interests and thereby fulfil their function within the existing order, by not probing the wounds which this order has and which, above all, it inflicts on each of us, even if we have not yet become the objects of wars or similar natural catastrophes of society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, what I have tried, with a certain insistence, to demonstrate to you regarding the relationship of sociology to economics also applies to the relationship of sociology to other neighbouring disciplines, if not in such an emphatic form; and it applies, above all, to its relationship to history. The separation from history, incidentally, took place only gradually. In Marx, who, of course, came from Hegel, the categories used are not only so-called systematic categories developed from concepts, but are always also, and intentionally, historical categories. In a very similar way, Hegel's own systematic categories are at the same time historical ones. Weber, too, was strongly guided by historical material. The de-historicizing of sociology that we are seeing today is a further symptom of its reification, of the amputation of that in it which is capable of growth. – But I shall speak about that on Thursday.

LECTURE SEVENTEEN

11 July 1968

[Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fact that sociology has an historical dimension, that its material is always at the same time historical material, is not really disputed. Regarding this whole complex of ideas it is in principle the case – as is characteristic of all methodological controversies in sociology – that what seem to be mere shifts of emphasis¹ carry far more weight with regard to the matter itself than is immediately apparent. And it is to just this fact, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I should like to draw your attention. The difference is that in established, and especially American, sociology the historical dimension is generally tolerated as so-called ‘background information’. Its purpose is to give us an idea of how all this came about, so that it is not suspended in mid-air, in keeping with the ideal of so-called interdisciplinary collaboration. What is entirely overlooked, however, is that history, and the historical context, is constitutive of sociology itself, in the sense that, considered in a purely immanent way, sociological categories have no meaning, and that society as such cannot be perceived without reference to the historical elements implicit within it. Historical knowledge is not something existing in the margin of sociology, but is central to it; and the most decisive of the differences between a critical theory of society, represented prototypically by that of Marx, and sociology in the restricted sense that has been criticized by Habermas² – and that I tried to characterize in the last lecture in particular – is the importance attributed to history. Marx’s ‘political economy’ and the Marxian

theory of society are also, essentially, historical theories, and are only understandable as such. Habermas has recently discussed this in detail in the major treatise which was published as a special issue of this philosophical gazette, or whatever it is called,³ with reference to the older problematic of epistemology. I do not wish to reiterate Habermas's argumentation, and would only ask all of you to look closely at this study. One might, perhaps, express its purport by saying that what should be regarded as the essence of social phenomena – essence simply in the sense of the essential – is largely nothing other than the history stored up in these phenomena. I have spoken to you of the dimension of interpretation, arguing that it is an essential, a central moment of sociology to interpret social phenomena as an expression of society, much as one may interpret a face as an expression of the psychological processes reflected in it. One might say, more precisely, that the dimension of interpretation in sociology lies primarily in the fact that history is stored up in phenomena which are seemingly at rest, which seem to be something given and entirely momentary. The faculty for interpretation is essentially the ability to perceive that which has become, or the dynamic arrested within phenomena. For example – to give an instance which comes to mind – the interpretation of cultural traits given by Thorstein Veblen refers to 'conspicuous consumption' and to the fact that culture at the broad level, where it presents itself to its consumers, is nothing other than an ostentatious show of control, power, prestige.⁴ What this theory really states is that all the traits by which such a seigniorial culture is characterized are traits of its own history, or rather its prehistory. That is to say that, to use his expression, the features emerging prominently from it are 'archaic traits'; and that, for example, a pretentiously imposing building imitated from a Florentine palace, of the kind which abound in Manhattan, is in reality nothing other than a survival of fortifications, of military ostentation in a time when such direct military sovereignty no longer exists, but in which the power and magnitude of capital are expressed in the use of such historically obsolete means, a use which is unconscious or corresponds only to a collective unconscious. That is what I meant by saying that the moment of social physiognomy, or, in general, the sociological vision, is the same thing as the ability to perceive what has become in something which presents itself as merely being; just as it is one of the essential faculties of a critical theory of society to grasp things which purport to be existent and thus given by nature in terms of their having come to be. One might express this quite simply by saying that only that which has become presents itself from the first in such a way that its possible alteration is unmistakable. But the importance of history – and I refer here, as I said,

not to an importance in the margin but to the constitutive importance of history for sociology – manifests itself in a still more radical sense: in the sociological law. I cannot, of course, set out a theory of the social law for you in this last lecture, but I can tell you one thing off the famous cuff, and without needing to resort to the no less famous distinction between the nomothetic and the idiographic,⁵ which, of course, is questionable, from the sociological perspective, since such things as social regularities do self-evidently exist. But these social regularities differ constitutively from those of the natural sciences through the form of their own historicity. If I could express this as a kind of precept, as a guideline, so that you have at least the opportunity to reflect on this problem after the lecture, I would say that in general the scientific regularity, or law, is of the kind which states: ‘whenever – then’. (I am not talking here of the latest physics – one does not always need to start from the ultra-modern when seeking to demarcate whole spheres of disciplines.) That is to say, whenever such and such are present, whenever such and such conditions are fulfilled, such and such an effect occurs. By contrast, the fundamental form of social laws is that after such and such and such have occurred in society, have unfolded in this direction and no other, then there is a high degree of probability, defined in Marx by the concept of the tendency,⁶ that such or such will occur. The form these regularities follow here is not ‘whenever – then’ but ‘after – then’; and constitutively implied in this ‘after’ is, of course, time and thus the whole historical dimension.⁷

If one wishes to understand – as Habermas has attempted, especially in the introduction to *Student und Politik*,⁸ a work I would strongly recommend you to peruse – what is really meant by the category of the public [Öffentlichkeit], it is not enough to define this concept or to describe public opinion and its real or supposed decline in phenomenological terms. One needs to know and include in one’s thought from the outset the processes to which this category of public opinion is subject and which – if anything has – have played an active part in the change in the function and inner composition of the public. One needs to know, for example, that the demand for a fully public realm [Öffentlichkeit] was first directed at feudal society, in the name of a natural reason virtually common to all people, as a condition of the democracy of people who have come of age. The most powerful expression of this is undoubtedly the second *Treatise on Government*⁹ by John Locke, with which, for just this reason, I would urgently advise all of you to familiarize yourselves. It is no less a basic text of western social theory than Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws*.¹⁰ On the other hand, however, it is inherent in this concept of the

public, by virtue of its dependence on subjective reason and not, as medieval thought required, on an objective spiritual order, that it included the concept of opinion from the outset, and thus, also, a moment of fortuitousness and caprice, which increasingly hollowed out the concept of the public until it became merely the quintessence of everything which everyone, more or less irresponsibly, thinks. And one must also know that the commodity character which spread increasingly with the unfolding bourgeois society, and especially the growing difficulty of utilizing capital, gave rise to a situation in which the public realm itself has been manipulated and finally monopolized, and has transformed itself, as a commodity, as something produced and treated for the purpose of sale, into the exact opposite of what its concept really implies. I believe one can only truly understand the phenomena of present-day ideology which have become so eminently important for sociology and are referred to by the concept of manipulation, if one includes these processes in one's thought. If the present-day phenomena of the public are studied without also considering what was intended by the concept of the public, and in what ways and, above all, under what compulsions this concept has internally transformed itself, one arrives at the entirely otiose, conceptless stocktaking which informs the activity now generally referred to as communication research. The word communication itself implicitly contains a neutralization which makes it appear to refer to nothing more than that some people communicate something to others, inform them of something, regardless of the fact that in the forms of this communication the entire historical relationships of power are constitutively contained. The contradiction thus constituted between the concept of the public and that which it has become is, in its turn, an essential component of a critical theory of the public; and if the historical moment in this is disregarded, anything like a critique of the public realm, and of the conditions determining it today, is quite impossible. I mean by this that the medium of social critique, disregarded by the prevailing sociology, is to be sought in the constitutive character of history for society. In the dominant sociology there is, indeed, a very strong tendency to amputate the historical dimension altogether. This is most trenchantly expressed in the famous dictum of the eldest Henry Ford: 'History is bunk.' Essentially the same formulation is prefigured in the last great speech of Mephistopheles at the end of *Faust*, when he says of everything that was and is no more: 'It's just as good as if it never were.'¹¹

The concept of the fact, which I have discussed with you on several occasions and which, of course, is the idol of present-day sociology, is characterized, among other things, by being presented as something

timeless, as a one-dimensional present. This is the reason for the paradox I have spoken of, whereby the prevalent empiricism is amputating, precisely, experience. The punctual character attributed to the fact as 'that which is the case', which disregards its eminent historicity, its historical implications, gives absolute status, as something which is thus-and-not-otherwise, to that which in reality has become. This, however, has enormous consequences; for in being made absolute, in losing its genesis, the fact appears as something natural, and therefore as something which in principle – as I explained to you earlier – is unalterable. To this extent the elimination of the historical dimension is an important instrument for sanctioning and justifying whatever happens currently to be the case. This is why I attach such decisive importance to the connection between history and sociology, which is also, incidentally, a corrective to the danger that a critical sociology might degenerate into a merely deductive system. If the fact of their having become is disregarded in phenomena, the perspective on what they might become is also lost.

I have spoken more than once in previous lectures of the connection between the reification of consciousness and established sociology. You may now be able to understand this with an extra shade of precision; for a reified consciousness is one which, by applying the standard of a conceptual system which is itself reified on the model of a functioning administrative apparatus, causes its object to congeal into something solid while at the same time 'momentizing' it. That which is nothing other than 'here and now' hardens and solidifies into the moment precisely through being registered as such. The merely momentary and the reified – these extreme opposites – coincide in that they both exclude the constitutive historical moment. That, however, is in absolute contrast to the subject matter of sociology itself, society, which is a vital, functioning process and not a mere descriptive concept for all the people who happen to be living at a given moment. Society, therefore, cannot be understood other than historically, since it does not present itself in any other way than in the temporal dimension of its own character as function. By disregarding this, the method falsifies the substance – one might say – a second time, by arresting society, which by virtue of its laws is something necessarily in motion, in its momentary state. The status quo, a category encountered unavoidably in this context, is a leading category of the current ideology. This is the blindness of anti-historical sociology to the immanent developmental tendencies of society and thus to what is really decisive in its subject matter. For the task of sociology is to perceive the direction in which this whole process is seeking to move, and to deduce from that whether and how one might intervene in

this tendency. I repeat in this context what I hinted at earlier, that a sociology which is focused solely on the momentary and calls itself empirical is devoid of experience, through neglecting in principle the dimension of time, of having become. Moreover, the subjective weakness of memory, which is connected to the category of 'ego weakness'¹² revealed by psychology, is a decisive feature of the rising heteronomy. 'All reification is forgetting',¹³ and criticism really means the same as remembrance – that is, mobilizing in phenomena that by which they have become, and thereby recognizing the possibility that they might have become, and could therefore be, something different.

This central importance of history for all sociological knowledge is particularly decisive for the workers' movement. Marx's 'Theses on Feuerbach',¹⁴ for example, cannot be correctly understood *in abstracto*, or severed from the historical dimension. They take on their meaning only in the context of the expectation of imminent revolution which existed at that time; without such an expectation they degenerate into mumbo-jumbo. Once this given possibility failed to be realized, Marx spent decades in the British Museum writing a theoretical work on national economy. That he did so without having engaged in much praxis in reality is not a matter of mere biographical accident; an historical moment is imprinted even in this.

The material used by major bourgeois sociologists like Max Weber and Durkheim was largely historical or ethnological, although the ethnological material can properly be subsumed under the historical. For the specifically sociological interest in anthropological and ethnological material in general lies in the fact that it is believed, rightly or wrongly, that something can be learned about earlier periods of our own allegedly high cultures from the rudiments of so-called earlier stages of humanity. Theorems such as Durkheim's concept of the 'collective consciousness' or Weber's of the 'spirit of capitalism', with the connection it draws between religion and social structures, are only possible at all as historical constructs, and are not simply demonstrated with reference to historical material. I do not need to tell you how productive they have proved for an understanding of society. But I should probably point out a danger of the historical viewpoint for sociology – if you will accept so schoolmasterly a term as danger, which is apt to be used while wagging a professorial finger and warning about the wrong tracks of scholarship – although in general I would prefer the wrong tracks. The danger in such cases, then, is that the relating of our society to the past, which was not so totally determined by economics or so thoroughly socialized as our epoch, can give the impression that mind or spirit was predominant in earlier times, or in society in general, rather than economic relationships. It

can certainly be postulated, at any rate for our epoch, that the latter is the case, and that the wide range of so-called spiritual phenomena has been integrated into the economic ones. Now, both Durkheim and Weber took infinite pains to distinguish sociology from psychology – Weber by using the concept of rationality,¹⁵ about which I have already spoken, and Durkheim with the concept of the social fact as something opaque.¹⁶ That brings me back to the position of sociology regarding psychology, for a special reason. The resistance to the assimilation of psychological moments, to the psychological dimension, is not confined to specialized positivist-bourgeois sociology but is very largely shared by Marxists. I recall the seminar on the authoritarian personality in the last semester,¹⁷ when a Marxist student called into question the whole concept of the authoritarian personality because he regarded it as a lapse into subjectivity, as distinct from an objective theory of values. Marxists have in general been anti-psychological, and probably still are in Russia, with the sole exception of Trotsky, who has been vilified precisely because he declared his adherence to psychoanalysis. This is a phenomenon that I should like to call ‘intolerance of ambiguity’,¹⁸ to use a phrase of Frenkel-Brunswik’s. It is a mental structure which thinks in black-and-white stereotypes and is closed in principle to anything entailing reflection on oneself or criticism. Nevertheless, there is a letter by Benjamin – which, unknown to me, was printed in the journal *alternative* during its polemics against me – in which he writes: ‘I would like nothing better than to be able to share your point of view’ – the addressee is unknown – ‘but in my opinion what is meant by social psychology can only be decided on the basis of a theory of society which takes class conflicts as its primary object. In Germany we have not had a surplus of contributions to such a theory, founded on the materialist method, and we still have none.’¹⁹ That clearly shows his antipathy to the psychological aspect. What might be said about this is that objective regularity undoubtedly plays the primordial role in society. Firstly, because the self-preservation of the human species through economic activity, and the self-preservation of each individual, have priority over psychological determinants. But secondly, for a reason I have already touched on more than once in this lecture, that the objective, institutional side of society has detached itself from and solidified in relation to the people of whom society is made up. At the same time, however, one must bear in mind that subjects, too, are a part of society, and that a certain condition of these subjects is needed in order that society can survive in its existing form. If the subjects were different, or if they were ‘mature’, as it is often, and not incorrectly, termed today, this society could probably not survive as it does, despite all

the means of compulsion available to it. The role of the subjective factor is changing in the overall social process. With increasing integration the superstructure–base relationship is losing its old clarity. The more completely subjects are embraced and determined by the system, the more the system survives not simply by applying compulsion to the subjects, but through the subjects themselves. To this extent Spencer's theory of development has been confirmed to a degree that can only be called ironic, and which goes immeasurably beyond anything he might himself have imagined. That everything now depends on people makes it easy for ideology to support itself. Subjects today are a negative moment; like all ideology, they are more ponderous, slower to change direction, than economic relationships and productive forces, and society maintains itself precisely through this inertia of the subjects. I once went so far as to say that subjects themselves today represent a large part of ideology,²⁰ and I see no reason to withdraw that formulation. It corresponds in a way to the much older idea, probably originated by Horkheimer, that psychology, that is, the psychical composition of individual people, becomes a 'cement'²¹ holding together the integrated society on the subjective side; and the studies of the Institut für Sozialforschung, which have been directed very extensively at investigating and criticizing ideology, have contributed substantially to this idea of 'cement'. You can see, therefore, that the motif of social psychology as we understand it, as an instrument or a moment of the relations of production, has not only a rightful but a necessary place in a critical theory. It might be said that under present conditions the subject is both: on one hand, ideology, because in reality the subject does not matter, and because there is something illusory about even believing oneself a subject in this society; on the other, however, the subject is also the potential, the only potential, by which this society can change, and in which is stored up not only all the negativity of the system but also that which points beyond the system as it now is. I have said that, despite this, one needs to hold fast to the primacy of objectivity, but it should be added that recognition of the reification of society should not itself be so reified that no thought is permitted which goes outside the sphere of reification – that would lead to mechanistic thinking.

It is an essential part of sociology to concern itself with the relationship between the system and human beings. I should like to demonstrate how important this is with reference to a problem with which it would really be the business of empirical social research to deal, but to which, for reasons I probably do not need to explain further, it has so far devoted surprisingly little attention. We all, to a certain extent, start from the assumption that the present culture industry, in

which should be included all the powers of social integration in a wider sense, actually does make people, shape them or at least maintain them, as they are. There is, however, something dogmatic and unverifiable in this; and if I, at any rate, have learned anything from the developments of the past year it is that one cannot simply assume this identity of the objective stimuli and the objective structures of consciousness, which have played a part in shaping people, and the actual behaviour of people. And it seems to me that the most important task of empirical social research today would be to investigate seriously how far people really are, and think, in the way the mechanisms make them. We have some pointers from studies by the Institut für Sozialforschung,²² which we have not, unfortunately, been able to take far enough to resolve a curious ambiguity. It is that, on the one hand, people obey the mechanisms of personalization operated by the culture industry – I'm thinking of the role of Soraya and Beatrix, for example. At the same time, however, it is very easy to ascertain, by just scratching a little below the surface but without any so-called depth interviews, that everyone really knows that Princess Beatrix and Queen Soraya, and anyone else involved, are not so terribly important. If that is really the case, if people are both ensnared and not ensnared – if, therefore, a double, self-contradictory consciousness is present here – the necessary social enlightenment, regarding, for example, the phenomenon of personalization – which, of course, is only a partial phenomenon in a far wider context – might start here. It could successfully explain to people that what is drummed into them as essential to society – including the so-called 'images' of politicians – is in reality not remotely as relevant as it is claimed to be. You might see from this that the possibilities of a social-psychological analysis are very important to critical sociology, too, and that, for the reasons I have mentioned to you, social psychology should not be disregarded.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are almost at an end. I can only say that, once again, I have not been able to say remotely as much in these introductory lectures as I intended to. That is partly because we lost more hours than I should actually have wished. But, on the other hand, such an introduction can really only influence you to be less naïve towards a whole series of problems, and to reflect on them. And I have told you myself why I have not given you what is called a complete overview of the subject.

I should just like to say one more word to you in connection with an academic matter. It relates to events with regard to my colleague Martin Stern.²³ I should like to precede this by saying that some years ago Herr Stern criticized me strongly as a Marxist literary historian. I would add that Herr Stern then

quite voluntarily apologized to me for these attacks²⁴ and has conducted himself with great decency, for which I think highly of him. I would also say that, naturally, there are fundamental differences between Herr Stern's views and mine, differences which are fully in the open. I would add that the differences between his teacher, Emil Staiger,²⁵ and myself are so extreme – I would say – as to exclude even the possibility of a discussion between Herr Staiger and myself. Having said all that, I consider that the method whereby an academic teacher no longer has the opportunity to put forward his professional opinion without interruption, or freely to express his ideas, is something which cannot be reconciled with freedom from repression, with political maturity and autonomy. And I believe that in view of the professional differences which exist in this case I am particularly qualified to say that this kind of struggle should be avoided in the fight for reform of the university and for social change; and I would ask you, if I may, to avoid it. It is not for me to interfere in your affairs, but I cannot possibly identify myself with these methods, and my standpoint in this is entirely identical to that set out by Habermas in the theses which have become famous²⁶ [*Loud hissing*]. I think I should . . . Now, Ladies and Gentlemen [*Prolonged loud hissing*], Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm sorry . . . I'm extremely sorry, but I consider that to hiss down views which for whatever reason one does not find congenial contradicts the idea of discussion, and I believe I have gained the right to discuss such matters with you, and not to get caught up in this kind of protest. You are aware that – heaven knows – I have never avoided discussion of these matters, nor will I do so in future. But then one really has to discuss, and not try to cut off the debate with mere noises of disapproval. But be that as it may, I thank you for your attention in these lectures, and especially for loyally attending right to the end, despite the sometimes difficult climatic conditions, as regards both university politics and the physical climate; I wish you a pleasant vacation.²⁷

EDITOR'S NOTES

Abbreviations

Adorno's writings, when translated, are quoted from the English-language editions. When no English translation is available, the references are to the German edition, *Gesammelte Schriften* (edited by Rolf Tiedemann in collaboration with Gretel Adorno, Susan Buck-Morss and Klaus Schultz, Frankfurt/Main 1970ff). The following abbreviations are used:

- GS 5 *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie/Drei Studien zu Hegel*, 3rd edn 1990
GS 6 *Negative Dialektik/Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*, 4th edn 1990
GS 8 *Soziologische Schriften I*, 3rd edn 1990
GS 9.2 *Soziologische Schriften II. Zweite Hälfte*, 1975
GS 10.1 *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft I: Prismen/Ohne Leitbild*, 1977
GS 10.2 *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft II: Eingriffe/Stichworte/Anhang*, 1977
GS 11 *Noten zur Literatur*, 3rd edn 1990
GS 13 *Die Musikalischen Monographien*, 3rd edn 1985
GS 14 *Dissonanzen/Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie*, 3rd edn 1990
GS 16 *Musikalische Schriften I–III. Klangfiguren/Quasi una fantasia/ Musikalische Schriften III*, 2nd edn 1990
GS 18 *Musikalische Schriften V*, 1984
GS 20.1 *Vermischte Schriften I*, 1986
GS 20.2 *Vermischte Schriften II*, 1986

Lecture One

- 1 The dating 16 April 1968, found both in a pirate edition of the lecture (see Theodor W. Adorno, *Vorlesung zur Einleitung in die Soziologie*,

- Junius-Drucke, Frankfurt/Main 1973) and on the transcription of the tape recordings of nine lectures made by a secretary at the Institut für Sozialforschung and preserved in the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, is incorrect. On 12 April 1968, directly after the conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie held at Frankfurt from 8 to 11 April 1968, Adorno went on holiday to Baden-Baden until 22 April 1968. The lectures were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 5 p.m.
- 2 Adorno is referring to the press reporting of the conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, which, in agreement with the papers delivered by Ralf Dahrendorf and Erwin K. Scheuch, had particularly deplored the remoteness of the 'Frankfurt sort' of sociology from praxis: 'Thousands of sociology students have found out after completing their studies that they and their theories are not needed in practice' (*Der Spiegel*, 22 April 1968, p. 84). At the same time the press reported criticisms by the students of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, which was said to have failed to provide 'precise information on the professional situation of sociologists' or on student numbers, or proper 'course planning for sociology' (*ibid.*).
 - 3 The theme of the conference of German sociologists was the question: 'Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?' Adorno, who had been chairman of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (DGS) from November 1963 to November 1967, had given the opening lecture, with the same title, as chairman of the planning committee. See *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft? Verhandlungen des 16. Deutschen Soziologentages. Im Auftrag der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, ed. by Theodor W. Adorno, Stuttgart 1969, pp. 12–26 (now GS 8, pp. 354–70).
 - 4 The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie was founded by Max Weber (1864–1920), Georg Simmel (1858–1918), Werner Sombart (1863–1941) and others in 1909. The DGS was forced to cease its activities in 1933–45. It was reconstituted in April 1946 under the chairmanship of Leopold von Wiese (1876–1969).
 - 5 Heinz Kluth (1921–77) had been Professor of Sociology at Hamburg University since 1961.
 - 6 The following year, as a result of the continuing deterioration of career prospects for sociologists, the governing body of the DGS, at a meeting on 11 April 1969, issued a statement opposing the further introduction of degree courses in sociology at universities. The introduction of sociology as a major subject was rejected primarily on grounds of insufficient professional opportunities. The setting up of new qualifications in social science, in which several subjects were combined, with sociology as either the central or a subsidiary subject, was recommended.
 - 7 The reference is to the recession of 1966 and 1967, which for the first time cast doubt on the future ability of universities to replace existing staff as jobs became vacant.
 - 8 The main reason for the growing number of sociology students since 1955 was the degree course introduced at Frankfurt in 1954, which enabled sociology to be studied as a major subject. Here and in the

following discussion Adorno bases his comments on statistical material gathered through internal surveys carried out at the Institut für Sozialforschung.

- 9 Ludwig von Friedeburg (b. 1924), head of department at the Institut für Sozialforschung from 1955 to 1962, then Professor of Sociology at the Freie Universität, Berlin, returned to Frankfurt in 1966, where in 1968 he was a director of the Institut and of the Sociology Department.
- 10 Adorno was alluding to the idea of education as formulated by German idealist philosophers such as Fichte and Schelling. (See Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 'Die Bestimmung des Menschen', in *Fichtes Werke*, ed. by Immanuel Hermann Fichte, vol. 2: *Zur theoretischen Philosophie II*, Berlin 1971 [photo reprint], pp. 165-319; F.W.J. Schelling, 'Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums', in *Schellings Werke*, new edn ed. by Manfred Schröter, vol. III: *Schriften zur Identitätsphilosophie 1801-06*, Munich 1927, pp. 229-374.)
- 11 On 4 November 1967 the Professor of Sociology at Konstanz University, Ralf Dahrendorf (b. 1929), had been elected to succeed Adorno as chairman of the DGS. In 1968 Dahrendorf became a member of the Executive Committee of the FDP.
- 12 The quotation is from the poem 'Kennst Du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen' from Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*; the third stanza contains the line: 'The mole seeks underground its dingy way' (see Goethe, *Poetische Werke, Romane und Erzählungen II: Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Berlin 1976, p. 149).
- 13 See Theodor W. Adorno, 'Zum Studium der Philosophie', in *Diskus*, Frankfurt students' newspaper, vol. 5 (1955), no. 2 (annex), pp. 81-3; now GS 20.1, pp. 318-26.
- 14 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, 7th impression, London/New York 1993, pp. 80-1.
- 15 As is seen from his use of the mathematical formulation in GS 13, p. 220, by 'determinate manifold' Adorno meant a 'self-contained multiplicity'.
- 16 Max Scheler (1874-1928) called the results of the positive sciences, which serve the 'domination and transformation of the world for our human goals and purposes', *Herrschafts- oder Leistungswissen* (see Max Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9: *Späte Schriften*, with an appendix edited by Manfred S. Frings, Bern/Munich 1976, p. 114).
- 17 See Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. by W.D. Halls, London 1982, ch. 1: 'What is a Social Fact?' At the end of the chapter Durkheim arrives at the definition: 'A social fact is any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint; or: which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations' (p. 59). On Durkheim, see Adorno's introduction to Émile Durkheim, *Soziologie und Philosophie*, Frankfurt/Main 1967; now GS 8, pp. 245-79.

- 18 See Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, Glencoe, IL 1951. In his introduction to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, Adorno insists, against this 'harmonistic tendency', on the 'contradictory nature of [science's] object':

In recent years, an example of this tendency has been provided by Talcott Parsons' well-known attempt to create a unified science of man. His system of categories subsumes individual and society, psychology and sociology alike, or at least places them in a continuum. The ideal of continuity, current since Descartes and Leibniz especially, has become dubious, though not merely as a result of recent natural scientific developments. In society this ideal conceals the rift between the general and the particular, in which the continuing antagonism expresses itself. The unity of science represses the contradictory nature of its object. [. . .] Such a science cannot grasp the societally posited moment of the divergence of the individual and society and of their respective disciplines. The pedantically organized total scheme, which stretches from the individual and his invariant regularities to complex social structures, has room for everything except for the fact that the individual and society, although not radically different, have historically grown apart. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, pp. 16-17)

- In a note on this passage, Adorno refers to his earlier study, *Zum Verhältnis von Soziologie und Psychologie*, which had appeared as early as 1955 in the first volume of *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie* (now GS 8, pp. 42-85). This essay contains a detailed critique of the attempt to unify psychology and social theory which Parsons had published in his essay 'Psychoanalysis and the Social Structure' (*The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, vol. XIX, 1950, no. 3, pp. 371ff).
- 19 See *Soziologische Exkurse*. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4). The titles of the first two chapters are: 'Begriff der Soziologie' and 'Gesellschaft'.
- 20 The passage in Hegel referred to by Adorno has not been identified. Adorno was probably thinking of the 'Preface' to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which states in a similar context: 'The intelligible form of Science is the way open and equally accessible to everyone, and consciousness as it approaches Science justly demands that it be able to attain to rational knowledge by way of the ordinary understanding' (G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller, Oxford 1977, pp. 7-8); also see the chapter: 'Verhältnis der Spekulation zum gesunden Menschenverstand', in Hegel, *Werke*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 2: *Jenaer Schriften 1801 bis 1807*, Frankfurt/Main 1974, pp. 30-5.
- 21 See August Comte, *The Positive Philosophy*, trans. by H. Martineau, New York 1974. Adorno used the translation of vols IV-VI by Valentine Dorn: *Soziologie*, 3 vols, 2nd edn, Jena 1923. Regarding the introduction of the term 'sociology' by Comte (1798-1857), to which Adorno refers in his lecture (see n. 19), we would quote a note from the first chapter of *Soziologische Exkurse*:

The term 'sociology' is found in Comte as early as his letter to Valat of 25.12.1824 (*Lettres d'Auguste Comte à Monsieur Valat*, Paris 1870, p. 158). The term reached the public in the fourth volume of Comte's main work in 1838. Up to then he had called the science he was aiming at *physique sociale*. He justifies the introduction of the new term as follows: 'I believe I may risk using this new word, which means exactly the same as my term *physique sociale* already introduced, so that I can designate this supplementary area of natural philosophy by a single term, which refers to the totality of the laws underlying social phenomena.' (ibid., p. 18)

- 22 The lecture was directly followed, on Tuesdays from 5 to 7 p.m., by an introductory seminar taking the form of tutorials, in which students did exercises based on the lecture.
- 23 See Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. by H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge 1996 (§§245 and 246).
- 24 In his essay "“Static” and “Dynamic” as Sociological Categories' (*Diogenes*, no. 33, Spring 1961, pp. 28–49) Adorno gives a detailed exposition and critique of Comte's dualism of statics and dynamics, order and progress.

Lecture Two

- 1 As in the lecture on 23 April, Adorno was referring to the prolonged, distorted reporting of the conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie in the press. Unanimous criticism was directed against the alleged lack of concrete, practically useful results which, it was claimed, were replaced by a 'sociology of conviction' (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13–15 April) and the methodological argument between 'empiricists and theoreticians' (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 11 April). On 26 April *Die Zeit* summed up the situation: 'At the centre of the Frankfurt sociologists' congress was the argument between the social pragmatists (represented by the politician Ralf Dahrendorf . . .) and the social philosophers (represented by the master of the Frankfurt School, Theodor W. Adorno).' See GS 8, pp. 351f.
- 2 In his introduction to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* (trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976), on which Adorno was working during the summer semester, he tried to influence the 'stage' of the controversy which was most topical at that time. The composition of the essay was closely linked to the present lecture. In a letter to Peter Szondi of 9 May 1968 he wrote: 'I have had absolutely no time to edit the book on aesthetics. This is partly because I have to write the long introduction to the Luchterhand volume on the positivist dispute in German sociology. I'm using material from it for my main lecture series.'
- 3 Regarding Adorno's critique of Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), see *Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre*, GS 8, pp. 457–77.
- 4 On the most important stages of the dispute on method, which passed into scholarly history as the 'positivist dispute in German sociology', see Lecture 4 n. 9.

- 5 Adorno saw Comte's sociology as having a similar function to that of the state in Hegel:

Just as Hegel expected the state to provide the balance between social contradictions – to master the forces which according to his theory were striving to transcend the bourgeois society, Comte, in whom rationality was not so critically aware of its real weakness as it was in the absolute idealist, awaited salvation from a sociology which converted the social contradictions into concepts within and between which contradictions were absent. The crudest model of these concepts are the static and dynamic laws. The neat division between them is supposed to prepare their reconciliation first in science and then in the world as well. What does not come into view in either Hegel or Comte is the possibility that the disintegrating society could be brought to a higher, more humane form through its own dynamic. Both want to preserve it within its existing institutions; this is why Comte adds the static principle as a corrective to the dynamic. (GS 8, p. 226; also see “Static” and “Dynamic” as Sociological Categories’, *Diogenes*, no. 33, Spring 1961, pp. 28–49)

- 6 On the relationship of Saint-Simon to Comte, see Oskar Negt, *Strukturbeziehungen zwischen den Gesellschaftslehren Comtes und Hegels*, Frankfurt/Main 1964, pp. 36f (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 14).
- 7 At the sociologists' conference Adorno had placed the question of the relationship of the productive forces to the relations of production at the centre of his lecture ‘Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?’ (See GS 8, esp. pp. 361–70).
- 8 On the relationship of Pareto's theory of ideology to the totalitarian state, see Adorno, ‘Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre’, GS 8, pp. 464–70.
- 9 See Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. by T.A. Sinclair, Harmondsworth 1984, book 1, 1253a (‘The State Exists by Nature’) and book 5 (‘Sources of Constitutional Change’).
- 10 See Lecture 1 n. 2 and n. 1 above.
- 11 An allusion to Wittgenstein's well-known formulation: ‘The world is all that is the case.’ See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London 1961, p. 5.
- 12 The formulation by Hegel, which Adorno mentions several times in his writings (e.g. GS 6, p. 24, GS 11, p. 485) has not been traced.
- 13 On the concepts of ‘bad’ and ‘true’ infinity, see G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 5: *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, Frankfurt/Main 1969, pp. 149–73.
- 14 See Adolf Löwe, *Economics and Sociology. A Plea for Co-operation in the Social Sciences*, London 1935; however, Adorno may possibly have been thinking of Löwe's essay ‘The Social Production of Technical Improvements’, *The Manchester School*, 8, 1937, pp. 109–24.
- 15 In his lecture ‘Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?’ given at the sociologists' conference, Adorno insisted that technology should not be blamed for the static moments in society:

It is not technology which is calamitous, but its entanglement with societal conditions in which it is fettered. I would just remind you that considera-

tion of the interests of profit and dominance have channelled technical development: by now it coincides fatally with the needs of control. Not by accident has the invention of means of destruction become the prototype of the new quality of technology. By contrast, those of its potentials which diverge from dominance, centralism and violence against nature, and which might well allow much of the damage done literally and figuratively by technology to be healed, have withered. (GS 8, pp. 362f)

- 16 Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. by James Strachey, vol. XV: *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (parts I and II), London 1961, p. 27.
- 17 On the way in which *Theorie des dialektischen Bildes*, never developed in writing by Benjamin, has reached us, see Rolf Tiedemann, *Dialektik im Stillstand. Versuche zum Spätwerk Walter Benjamins*, Frankfurt/Main 1983, pp. 32f and 40 (n. 17).

Lecture Three

- 1 A group of philosophers, natural scientists and mathematicians, the so-called 'Vienna Circle', who developed the foundations of 'logical empiricism' in the 1920s and 1930s. Important representatives included Moritz Schlick (1882–1936), who was appointed to Ernst Mach's (1838–1916) chair in Vienna in 1922 and is regarded as the founder of the Vienna Circle, Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970) and Otto Neurath (1882–1945). On the criticism of the theoretical ideas of the Vienna Circle which developed as early as the 1930s, see Max Horkheimer, 'Der neueste Angriff auf die Metaphysik' and 'Traditionelle und kritische Theorie', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Alfred Schmidt and Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, vol. 4: *Schriften 1936–1941*, Frankfurt/Main 1988, pp. 108–61 and 162–216.
- 2 This formulation has not been traced in Schlick's writings. Unlike the earlier positivism of Mach, for example, which confines itself to describing only what is directly and positively given, Schlick fully assumes the existence of things and processes which are not given, but regards the difference of appearances and things as irrelevant for knowledge. That an appearance might not correspond to its not directly given being is, for Schlick, an 'illusory problem', as definitions of being are in principle 'unsayable'. This, however, is precisely what concerns Adorno:

Not the least significant of the differences between the positivist and dialectical conceptions is that positivism, following Schlick's maxim, will only allow appearance to be valid, whilst dialectics will not allow itself to be robbed of the distinction between essence and appearance. For its part, it is a societal law that decisive structures of the social process, such as that of the inequality of the alleged equivalency of exchange, cannot become apparent without the intervention of theory. Dialectical thought counters the suspicion of what Nietzsche termed nether-worldly (*hinterweltlerisch*) with the assertion that concealed essence is non-essence. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, p. 11)

- 3 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. 'Of the Afterworlds-men', trans. by R.J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth 1961, pp. 58-61.
- 4 See Adorno, 'Wissenschaftliche Erfahrungen in Amerika', GS 10.2, pp. 702-38.
- 5 See Erwin K. Scheuch, 'Methodische Probleme gesamtgesellschaftlicher Analysen', in *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft? Verhandlungen des 16. Deutschen Soziologentages. Im Auftrag der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, ed. by Theodor W. Adorno, Stuttgart 1969, pp. 153-82; also see the report of the discussion which followed Scheuch's paper (*ibid.*). For Scheuch (b. 1928), not only the limits of sociology as a separate discipline, but also its self-limitation with respect to its subject matter, follow from its 'instruments'. For this reason, 'what appears to social philosophers as an inherent defect is a valid act of self-limitation. It is not the subject or the understanding of a given problem which finally defines the limits of research, but the research instruments available at any time, that is, which meets the demands of objectivity' (*ibid.*, p. 154).
- 6 Adorno was thinking of the Fascism-Scale used in *The Authoritarian Personality*, in the development of which he played a key part. (Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford in collaboration with Betty Aron, Maria Hertz Levinson and William Morrow, *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York 1950 [*Studies in Prejudice*, vol. 1].) Other scales were modelled on it at the Institut für Sozialforschung, e.g. the A-Scale, 'to identify susceptibility to authoritarian behaviour', which members of the Institut also called the 'Adorno-Scale'. (See Ludwig von Friedeburg, Jürgen Hörlemann, Peter Hübner et al., *Freie Universität und politisches Potential der Studenten. Über die Entwicklung des Berliner Modells und den Anfang der Studentenbewegung in Deutschland*, Neuwied/Berlin 1968, p. 572.)
- 7 See Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, 2nd edn, Glencoe, IL. 1957, pp. 5f. Merton justified his attempt to resolve the dilemma presented by 'theory' and 'empirics' on purely pragmatic grounds:

Throughout I attempt to focus attention on what might be called *theories of the middle range*: theories intermediate to the minor working hypotheses evolved in abundance during the day-by-day routines of research, and the all-inclusive speculations comprising a master conceptual scheme from which it is hoped to derive a very large number of empirically observed uniformities of social behavior.

- 8 See Ralf Dahrendorf, 'Herrschaft, Klassenverhältnis und Schichtung', in *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft? Verhandlungen des 16. Deutschen Soziologentages*, pp. 88-99. In his paper Dahrendorf referred directly to Adorno's introductory lecture 'Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?' and placed the 'debate about the relation of theory and praxis' in sociology at the centre of his lecture.
- 9 See Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik II*, Frankfurt/Main 1972, p. 124.

- 10 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie. Studien über Husserl und die phänomenologischen Antinomien*, Frankfurt/Main 1956; now GS 5, pp. 7–245.
- 11 See Lecture 1 n. 17.
- 12 The closing sentences of the *Communist Manifesto* (1847/8) by Marx and Engels, paraphrased here by Adorno, are: ‘The workers have nothing to lose in this [revolution] but their chains. They have a world to gain. Workers of the world, unite!’
- 13 T.W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, 7th impression, London/New York 1993, p. 194.
- 14 See Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, London 1876ff; see esp. §§227–8 and §§448–53: ‘Political Integration’ and §§454–63: ‘Political Differentiation’; on the integrating tendencies of society through the increasing economic division of labour see esp. §§763–7. On Spencer’s theory of growing socialization through integration and social differentiation, see the passages on Spencer in *Soziologische Exkurse. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen*, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4), pp. 28–36 and Lecture 5.
- 15 On the definition of capitalism in Weber, see Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I*, Tübingen 1947, pp. 4ff – Adorno was alluding here to Weber’s procedure of preceding a discussion with fundamental concepts in the form of ‘verbal definitions’. A detailed account of the method of Weber’s definitions is to be found in *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E.B. Ashton, London 1973, pp. 164–6.
- 16 See Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis. Sozialphilosophische Studien*, Neuwied/Berlin 1963; and ‘The Analytical Theory of Science and Dialectics’, in Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, pp. 131–62.
- 17 See Adorno, ‘Gesellschaft’, in *Evangelisches Staatslexikon*, ed. by Hermann Kunst et al., Stuttgart/Berlin 1966, cols 636–43; now GS 8, pp. 9–19.

Lecture Four

- 1 Adorno was thinking primarily of René König and Helmut Schelsky (see GS 8, p. 314), in relation both to the conference of German sociologists and to the paper delivered by Erwin Scheuch:

Up to now in this century sociology, understood as a separate discipline among other sciences of man and his products, has, with few exceptions, abstained from analysing total social systems. In the analysis of concrete phenomena, ‘society’ as a social or cultural system is generally used as a mere background to the subject matter identified, being introduced as a rudimentary element in the process of explanation. As a subject for explanation itself, ‘society’ is usually confined to approaches which, in their problem selection and procedure, should be characterized as social philosophy. (Erwin K. Scheuch, ‘Methodische Probleme gesamtgesellschaftlicher Analysen’, in *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?*

Verhandlungen des 16. Deutschen Soziologentages. Im Auftrag der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, ed. by Theodor W. Adorno, Stuttgart 1969, p. 153)

- 2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. by Karl Schlechta, 9th edn, Munich 1982, vol. 2, p. 820; see *Soziologische Exkurse. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen*, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4), p. 22.
- 3 See Lecture 1 n. 22.
- 4 See Helmut Schelsky, *Ortsbestimmung der deutschen Soziologie*, Düsseldorf/Cologne 1959.
- 5 Adorno was referring to the term 'socialization' (*Vergesellschaftung*) also used by Max Weber; see Max Weber, *Grundriß der Sozialökonomik. III. Abteilung. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Zweiter Teil, Kapitel II: 'Typen der Vergemeinschaftung und Vergesellschaftung', 3rd edn, Tübingen 1947, pp. 194–215.
- 6 See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class. An Economic Study of the Evolution of Institutions*, New York 1989; see esp. ch. 9, 'The Conservation of Archaic Traits' (pp. 212–45), in which Veblen describes the 'ante-predatory stage of culture' of 'peaceable savages'.
- 7 Helge Pross (1927–84) had been an academic assistant at the Frankfurt Institut für Sozialforschung since 1954; she took her doctorate at Frankfurt University in 1963 and taught sociology at Giessen from 1965 and at Siegen from 1976.
- 8 The Zürich constitutionalist Johann Caspar Bluntschli (1808–81) developed his concept of society (*Gesellschaft*) in contradistinction to the corresponding 'popular' concept of the community (*Gemeinschaft*) of the pre-bourgeois age: 'The whole concept of society in the social and political sense has its natural basis in the customs and views of the Third Estate. It is not really a popular concept, but a *Third Estate concept*, although we have grown used to identifying the state itself with bourgeois society in the literature' (J.C. Bluntschli, article 'Gesellschaft', in Bluntschli, *Deutsches Staats-Wörterbuch*, Stuttgart 1859, vol. 4, pp. 247f; quoted from *Soziologische Exkurse*, p. 37).
- 9 The controversy of 'recent years' referred to here began in October 1961 with the papers delivered by Karl R. Popper and Theodor W. Adorno on the 'Logic of the Social Sciences' at the Tübingen conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie. Jürgen Habermas continued it in 1963, in a paper entitled: 'The Analytical Theory of Science and Dialectics'. To this Hans Albert replied with the polemic referred to by Adorno, 'The Myth of Total Reason'. (All contributions to this debate are to be found in Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976.) Albert referred to Adorno's formulation that 'Probably no experiment could convincingly demonstrate the dependence of each social phenomenon on the totality, for the whole which preforms the tangible phenomena can never itself be reduced to particular experimental arrangements' (*ibid.*, p. 113); he also wrote:

It seems to me that the untestability of Adorno's assertion is basically linked with the fact that neither the concept of totality used, nor the nature of the dependence asserted, is clarified to any degree. Presumably, there is nothing more behind it than the idea that somehow everything is linked with everything else. To what extent some view could gain a methodological advantage from such an idea would really have to be demonstrated. In this matter, verbal exhortations of totality ought not to suffice. (ibid., p. 175)

Also see the report of the discussion of Scheuch's paper in the transactions of the conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie of 1968, in which Adorno replied to the criticism again voiced by Scheuch (*Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?*, p. 188).

- 10 See Adorno, 'Gesellschaft', in *Evangelisches Staatslexikon*, ed. by Hermann Kunst et al., Stuttgart/Berlin 1966, cols 636–43; now GS 8, pp. 9–19.
- 11 Adorno's additions to quotations are enclosed in < >.
- 12 GS 8, pp. 13f.
- 13 In the Afterword to the second edition of *Das Kapital* Marx writes: '[research] has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented' (Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1: *The Process of the Production of Capital*, intro. by Ernest Mandel, trans. by Ben Fowkes, Harmondsworth 1976, p. 102).
- 14 Adorno used the term *Funktionsprozeß* in the lecture – clearly a slip of the tongue.
- 15 The quotation from Brecht's 'Dreigroschenprozeß' (regarding the *Dreigroschenoper* plagiarism case) reads: 'The situation is complicated by the fact that a simple reproduction says less than ever about the reality. A photograph of the Krupp or AEG factories yields practically nothing about these institutions. True reality has slipped to the functional level. The reification of human relationships, for example, the factory, no longer says anything about them' (Bertolt Brecht, *Werke. Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, ed. by Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf et al., vol. 21, Schriften I, 1914–1933, Frankfurt/Main 1992, p. 469).
- 16 Karl Korsch (1886–1961) emigrated to London in 1933 and after his expulsion from England lived for some time with Brecht in Denmark.

Lecture Five

- 1 The psychoanalyst Frederick Wyatt, born in Vienna in 1911, taught at the Psychological Clinic of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. His lecture was titled: 'Amerikanische Studenten protestieren: soziale Umstände und psychologische Ursachen' (American students protest: social conditions and psychological causes).
- 2 See William Graham Sumner, *Folkways. A Study in the Social Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores and Morals*, Boston 1906;

- see *Soziologische Exkurse*. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4), p. 157.
- 3 Adorno was thinking of the element of compulsion, of 'resistance', which Durkheim's *faits sociaux*, as conventionalized collective modes of behaviour, exert on the individual, without being transparent or understandable by the individual through their constitution: 'The given structure, which is not derived from classification and which Durkheim calls the impenetrable, is an essentially negative element which is irreconcilable with its own purpose, the conservation and satisfaction of humanity' (GS 8, pp. 308f; see Durkheim, *Die Regeln der soziologischen Methode*, Neuwied/Berlin 1970, pp. 106ff). [English edn: *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. by W.D. Halls, London 1982.]
 - 4 See T.W. Adorno and Ursula Jaerisch, 'Anmerkungen zum sozialen Konflikt heute', in *Gesellschaft, Recht und Politik*. Wolfgang Abendroth zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. by Heinz Maus et al., Neuwied/Berlin 1968, pp. 1–19; now GS 8, pp. 177–95.
 - 5 According to Durkheim, the norms and social conventions of the collective consciousness are such a mental entity, which manifests itself, however, as a *fait social*, a 'thing'. While these norms are not facts capable of being apprehended empirically, they are second-degree realities which present themselves to the individual. (See Durkheim, *Die Regeln der soziologischen Methode*, pp. 89f and 115ff.)
 - 6 An allusion to Carnap's 'sensualist interpretation of the propositions in the protocol' (GS 8, p. 285) and to the 'empirical criterion of meaning'; see Lecture 4, p. 34, in which Adorno speaks of the 'positivist criterion of a significant datum'.
 - 7 He is referring to Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*.
 - 8 See Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, London 1876ff, §13.
 - 9 See Durkheim, *Die Regeln der soziologischen Methode*, pp. 169ff.
 - 10 On the complementary relationship between 'integration' and 'differentiation' in Spencer's dynamic theory of society, see *Soziologische Exkurse*, p. 33.
 - 11 Although *Soziologische Exkurse* does not contain any chapters devoted to the concepts of 'integration' and 'differentiation', the chapter on *Gesellschaft* includes a brief account of Spencer's theory of development (see Lecture 3 n. 14).

Lecture Six

- 1 The opening of the lecture has not been preserved; however, Adorno links up directly to the closing sentences of Lecture 5, so that the missing beginning can be reconstructed.
- 2 Franz Neumann (1900–54) emigrated to London in 1933 and later moved to the USA. From 1936 to 1942 he worked at the New York Institute of Social Research. His study *Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* was published in New York in 1942.
- 3 See Erwin K. Scheuch, 'Methodische Probleme gesamtgesellschaftlicher Analysen', in *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft? Deutsche*

- Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, ed. by Theodor W. Adorno, Stuttgart 1969, pp. 156 and 159.
- 4 An allusion to the neoclassicism and folklorism in the music of the 1920s (see Adorno, 'Die stabilisierte Musik', GS 18, pp. 721–8).
 - 5 On 11 April 1968 Rudi Dutschke was critically wounded by three gunshots from the worker Josef Bachmann. The attack, which was regarded by the students as a direct result of the pogrom mood incited by the Springer press, gave rise to the blockades of the Springer publishing house beginning in the Easter period. In a public statement in the weekly *Die Zeit*, Adorno, Ludwig von Friedeburg, Alexander Mitscherlich and other academics and writers had commented on the attack on Dutschke and demanded a public inquiry into Springer Verlag's 'practices of journalistic manipulation'. (See 'Die Erklärung der Vierzehn', *Die Zeit*, no. 16, 19 April 1968.)
 - 6 See Manfred Teschner, *Politik und Gesellschaft im Unterricht. Eine soziologische Analyse der politischen Bildung an hessischen Gymnasien*, Frankfurt/Main 1968 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 21).
 - 7 See Lecture 5 n. 3.
 - 8 On the original conception of Hegel's 'system of science' and the development of the *Phenomenology* and the *Science of Logic* into autonomous works, see 'Anmerkung der Redaktion zu Band 3' in G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 3, Frankfurt/Main 1969, pp. 595ff.
 - 9 See Helmut Schelsky, *Ortsbestimmung der deutschen Soziologie*, Düsseldorf/Cologne 1959; on Schelsky's polemic against Adorno, which runs through his whole book, see esp. ch. III, 3: 'Die Wirklichkeitserfassung der empirischen Sozialforschung', pp. 67–85; on the concept of the 'transcendental theory of society' see the similarly titled ch. IV, 2, pp. 93–109. On the concept of 'unregimented experience' see GS 8, pp. 342f.
 - 10 In a note to his essay 'The Analytical Theory of Science and Dialectics', Jürgen Habermas referred to Alfred Schütz (1899–1959) in precisely this context: 'In connection with Dilthey's and Husserl's concept of "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*), Alfred Schütz rescues a concept of experience, which has not yet been positivistically circumscribed, for the methodology of the social sciences (in *Collected Papers*, The Hague 1962, Part I, pp. 4ff)' (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, p. 135).
 - 11 Thomas Luckmann, born in Yugoslavia in 1927, had been appointed Professor of Sociology in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Frankfurt in 1965, after teaching for several years at the New School for Social Research, New York.

Lecture Seven

- 1 Arend Kulenkampff (b. 1936), then assistant in the Philosophy Department, and Professor of Philosophy at Frankfurt from 1972.

- 2 See Theodor W. Adorno, J. Décamps, L. Herberger et al., 'Empirische Sozialforschung', in *Handwörterbuch der Sozialwissenschaften* (also a re-edition of the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*), 6th edn, Stuttgart 1954, pp. 419-32; now GS 9.2, pp. 327-59.
- 3 See Lecture 1 n. 21.
- 4 On the concept of the small or informal group, see the chapter 'Gruppe' in *Soziologische Exkurse. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen*, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4), pp. 55-69; also see Lecture 15, pp. 131f.
- 5 This refers to the study carried out by Elton Mayo (1880-1949) et al. at the Hawthorne factory in Chicago in 1927-32, which became a model of industrial-sociological research. By taking account of social and psychological moments it superseded the notion established by F.W. Taylor (1856-1915) that rising productivity, higher wages and thus greater willingness to work could only be achieved by mechanical rationalization. (On the Mayo study see Lecture 15, pp. 131f.)
- 6 In his *Ortsbestimmung der deutschen Soziologie* Helmut Schelsky writes:

a sociology which loses itself in the subject matter is just as much on the wrong track as one which never gets to the subject through reflecting on itself. Thus, a science is abstract not only if it thinks of itself in terms of generalities such as object or method, but also if it believes itself to be apprehending its subject concretely and does not include itself as the knowing subject in the act of knowing. This kind of abstraction is clearly the peculiar danger facing the empirical social research so topical today. (*Ortsbestimmung der deutschen Soziologie*, Düsseldorf/Cologne 1959, pp. 8f)

In his own copy of the book Adorno made the note: 'concretism' at this point.

- 7 See Hermann Nunberg, 'Ichstärke und Ichschwäche', *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, vol. 24, 1939, pp. 49-61.
- 8 Aldous Huxley's (1894-1963) novel *Brave New World* came out in London in 1932.
- 9 George Orwell's (i.e. Eric Blair, 1903-50) novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in London in 1949.
- 10 See Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber, London 1967, 'Aldous Huxley and Utopia', pp. 97-117.
- 11 See Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. by Matthew J. O'Connell et al., New York 1974.
- 12 In its 'Recommendations for the Reorganization of Studies at Universities' of 14 May 1966, the Scientific Council had demanded a compulsory restriction of the period of study, binding curricula and restricted entry to degree courses. (See Jürgen Habermas, 'Zwangsjacke für die Studienreform. Die befristete Immatrikulation und der falsche Pragmatismus des Wissenschaftsrates', in Habermas, *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform*, Frankfurt/Main 1969, pp. 92-107.)
- 13 Since the winter semester 1966/7 teachers and students of the Sociology Department of the University of Frankfurt had been discussing a

‘reorganization of research and teaching’ in a study reform committee. The ‘division’ that Adorno talks about here, that is, the division of the course into a foundation course, intended to impart knowledge of general, theoretical sociology, and a main course reserved to the ‘special sociologies’, was also discussed. The committee’s work foundered on the opposition of faculty representatives to a standard curriculum, among other things.

- 14 As he explains later (see p. 61), Adorno is referring to the ‘concrete totality’ in Hegel and Marx (see G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 6, Frankfurt/Main 1969, p. 516; Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, ed. by the Institute for Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the SED, vol. 13, 7th edn, Berlin 1975, p. 632).
- 15 It has not been ascertained which study Adorno was referring to here.
- 16 Adorno was thinking of Weber’s treatise *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons, London 1976.
- 17 *Beiträge und Studien zu einem Sozialatlas*, published by the Bundesministerium des Inneren, came out from 1956 and were intended to be ‘building bricks [...] for a more comprehensive future description of the work area of the Bundesministerium des Inneren’, as we read in the Preface to the first volume, *Die öffentliche Fürsorge* (Cologne 1956).
- 18 See n. 14.

Lecture Eight

- 1 The lecture on Thursday, 16 May was the first to be cancelled because of the strike of 14–16 May, held in protest against the impending passing of the Emergency Laws. The march on Bonn in protest against the Emergency Laws had been held on 11 May; the second reading of the emergency legislation was scheduled for 15 May. Political demonstrations were held at many universities in parallel to it; lectures and seminars were cancelled. In Frankfurt the entrances to the university were blocked by students on 15/16 May. A declaration entitled ‘Abgeordnete stellen sich nicht’ (MPs won’t take a stand), signed by Adorno among others, appeared in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* of 17 May. In it the strike measures were justified with reference to the irresponsible behaviour of many Bundestag members during the second reading of the emergency legislation. In France a call for a general strike had been made on 13 May.
- 2 A term introduced into sociology by the Dutchman Rudolf Steinmetz (1862–1940); see Steinmetz, ‘Die Soziographie in der Reihe der Geisteswissenschaften’, in *Archiv für Rechts- und Wirtschaftsphilosophie*, vol. VI, 1913; see *Soziologische Exkurse. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen*, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4), p. 135.
- 3 Goethe, *Faust*, part I, line 1939.
- 4 Fichte’s *Science of Knowledge* first appeared in 1794, Hegel’s *Science of Logic* in 1812/16. On the historical dialectic of the concept of science Adorno writes:

When Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* and Hegel's *Science of Logic* were written at the turn of the eighteenth century, the present concept of science with its claim to exclusiveness would have been critically placed on the level of the pre-scientific, whilst nowadays what was then termed science, no matter how chimerically it was called absolute knowledge, would have been rejected as extra-scientific by what Popper refers to as scientism. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, p. 18)

- 5 In his introductory lecture to the sociologists' conference 'Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?', Adorno compared the concept of social stratification to the Marxian concept of class:

The criteria of the class relationship, which empirical research likes to call those of social stratification – according to income, standard of living and education – are generalizations of findings made from individuals. To this extent they may be called subjective. By contrast, the earlier concept of class was intended to be objective, independent of indices derived directly from the lives of subjects, no matter how these indices may otherwise express social objectivities. (GS 8, p. 355)

- 6 The quality of the recording of this lecture is extremely poor. A question mark after words added in square brackets indicates a very unclear passage or an unverified transcription; [...] denotes a completely unintelligible passage which could not be completed as it stands. In the few cases of this which occur, however, only a small loss of text, of two or, at most, three words, can be assumed.
- 7 Here, Adorno takes up Hegel's formulation from the *Science of Logic*: 'that nothing *exists*, either in heaven or in nature or in the mind or wherever, which does not contain both immediacy and mediation, so that both these determinations prove to be *undivided* and *indivisible*, and the opposition between them null' (G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 5: *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, Frankfurt/Main 1969, p. 66; see Lecture 12, p. 102).
- 8 See Leopold von Wiese's article 'Beziehungssoziologie', in *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie*, ed. by Alfred Vierkandt, Stuttgart 1931, pp. 66–81.
- 9 See Georg Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*, Munich/Leipzig 1908; now in Georg Simmel, *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Otthein Rammstedt, vol. 11, Frankfurt/Main 1992; subsequent references are to this edition.
- 10 See Simmel, *Soziologie*, ch. IV: 'Der Streit', pp. 284–382.
- 11 See Ralf Dahrendorf, 'Elemente einer Theorie des sozialen Konflikts', in Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft und Freiheit. Zur soziologischen Analyse der Gegenwart*, Munich 1963, pp. 197–235.
- 12 See Lewis A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, Glencoe, IL 1956.
- 13 See Lewis A. Coser, 'Gewalt und gesellschaftlicher Wandel', in *Atomzeitalter, Information und Meinung*, vol. 11, November 1966, pp. 321ff. The essay 'Anmerkungen zum sozialen Konflikt heute', co-written with

- Ursula Jaerisch, gives an account of this debate, which goes back to Georg Simmel (see GS 8, pp. 177–95).
- 14 See Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View', trans. by L.W. Beck, in *Kant. On History*, Indianapolis/New York 1963, pp. 11–26. Adorno based his lecture on the concept of *progress*, held in 1962, on the important concept of history in Kant's philosophy of history (see GS 10.2, p. 618).
 - 15 See Simmel, *Soziologie*, pp. 348f.
 - 16 An allusion to the notion of the 'invisible hand' in Adam Smith's *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*.
 - 17 See Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 3: *The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*, trans. by David Fernbach, Harmondsworth 1981, ch. 50: 'The Illusion Created by Competition', pp. 992–1016.
 - 18 Adorno may have been thinking of Arnold Gehlen (1904–76) and the philosophical anthropology developed by him. In it humans are regarded as biologically conditioned 'flawed beings' in need of stabilizing institutions, which can be modified only instrumentally, for the purpose of survival.
 - 19 Regarding the terms 'item' and 'universe' used here and subsequently, and the procedures of 'sampling' and 'content analysis', see the article 'Empirische Sozialforschung' written by Adorno, J. Décamps, L. Herberger et al. (GS 9.2, pp. 327–59).

Lecture Nine

- 1 On 23 May, the feast of the Ascension, no lecture was held. The lectures on 28 and 30 May were cancelled: the third and final reading of the Emergency Powers legislation was scheduled for 29/30 May. On 25 May the action committee 'Demokratie im Notstand', in an appeal signed by Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Alexander Mitscherlich, Walter Rüegg and Siegfried Unseld, had called on people to attend an announcement which was held in the broadcasting studio of the Hessischer Rundfunk on 28 May. Together with numerous writers such as Heinrich Böll, Martin Walser and Hans Magnus Enzensberger, academics, lawyers, publishers, etc., Adorno delivered the address 'Gegen die Notstandsgesetze' (see GS 20.1, pp. 396f). The SDS (German writers' association), with the committee of 'Notstand der Demokratie', which was supported by the IG Metall union, had called for a general strike in firms and higher education institutes in protest against the Emergency Powers Act. Then, on 27 May, after the rector of the university had closed the institution as a precaution, the rector's office was occupied by students. An attempt was made to set up a 'political university'. After three days the students were evicted and the office was occupied by the police. The Emergency Powers Act was passed by the Bundestag on 30 May 1968. During the following Whitsun period a congress of pupils and students called by

- the Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften was held in the refectory of Frankfurt University. At the congress Habermas delivered his ‘Thesen zur Kritik der Protestbewegung’ on 2 June; it was published in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* on 5 June. (See Jürgen Habermas, ‘Die Scheinrevolution und ihre Kinder’, in *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform*, Frankfurt/Main 1969, pp. 188–201.) Because of the Whitsun holidays no classes were held until 5 June. The lecture on 6 June was cancelled, since Adorno was in Munich to record a discussion on music criticism with Joachim Kaiser for the Bayerischer Rundfunk. He then travelled to Würzburg, where he gave the lecture ‘Zur Grundfrage der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaftsstruktur’ (unpublished). This was a revised version of his introductory lecture given at the sociologists’ conference ‘Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?’ in April, which was broadcast by the Hessischer Rundfunk on 4 June.
- 2 He is referring to the various ‘sit-ins’, ‘teach-ins’ and ‘go-ins’ which were a feature of the protest movement at that time.
 - 3 See Hans Freyer, *Soziologie als Wirklichkeitswissenschaft. Logische Grundlegung des Systems der Soziologie*, Leipzig Berlin 1930. Freyer’s definition of the science of reality as the ‘self-recognition of an event in the consciousness of the person existentially involved in this event’ (ibid., p. 202) implies the linkage referred to by Adorno; also see the opening of Lecture 16.
 - 4 Regarding the tradition of this topos from antiquity and its reception by Adorno, see *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*, GS 5, pp. 147f (n.).
 - 5 In the chapter on amphiboly in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant argues against Leibniz’s doctrine that the inner essence of things can only be known by reason; see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 320ff.
 - 6 Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1901–76) emigrated to the USA in 1933 and ran the radio research programme at Princeton; since 1940 he had been Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, NY. On Adorno’s collaboration with Lazarsfeld on the Princeton Radio Research Project see Adorno, ‘Wissenschaftliche Erfahrungen in Amerika’ (GS 10.2, pp. 702–38); also see Lecture 16, p. 138.
 - 7 On the ‘Gemeindestudie des Instituts für Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung’, Darmstadt 1952–4, produced in collaboration with the Frankfurter Institut für Sozialforschung, see the article ‘Gemeindestudien’, in *Soziologische Exkurse. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen*, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4), pp. 133–50; the study comprises nine monographs, for which Adorno wrote the introductions, partly in collaboration with Max Rolfes (see GS 20.2, pp. 605–39).
 - 8 See the fourth, sixth and seventh monographs in the ‘Darmstädter Gemeindestudie’, which form a unity: Gerhard Baumert, ‘Jugend der Nachkriegszeit. Lebensverhältnisse und Reaktionsweisen’, Darmstadt 1952; Irma Kuhr, ‘Schule und Jugend in einer ausgebombten Stadt’; and Giselheid Koepnick, ‘Mädchen einer Oberprima. Eine Gruppenstudie’, Darmstadt 1952.

- 9 See Helmut Schelsky et al., *Arbeitslosigkeit und Berufsnot der Jugend*, 2 vols, Cologne 1952. Adorno was probably thinking of the idea put forward by Schelsky of a 'levelled middle-class society', resulting from increased social levelling after the war (see GS 8, pp. 518ff). Contrary to this, Gerhard Baumert's study on post-war youth in Darmstadt showed that, in addition to the persistence of economic differences and hierarchies, the corresponding 'class-consciousness' remained intact. In his introduction to the study Adorno stressed that,

despite war, catastrophic bombing, devaluation and currency reform, the social differentiation matches that which existed before the war, or at least closely resembles it. The thesis often put forward that German society has been economically, sociologically and psychologically levelled by what has happened can be regarded as refuted by Baumert's monograph, at least for the sector discussed, as it is also invalidated by numerous findings of other studies within the project. The differentiation concerns objective aspects – for example, living conditions – as well as subjective ones: young people's consciousness of their own 'status'. (GS 20.2, p. 624)

- 10 On the scaling technique mentioned, i.e. a procedure for measuring research results which allows units to be entered on a continuum, see Section 8, 'Konstruktion von Skalen', in the article 'Empirische Sozialforschung' (GS 9.2, pp. 347–9).
- 11 See T.W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford in collaboration with Betty Aron, Maria Hertz Levinson and William Morrow, *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York 1950 (*Studies in Prejudice*, vol. 1).
- 12 As in the 'Guttman Scale': 'In the Guttman Scale (scalogram analysis) the "items" are supposed to be one-dimensional, i.e. agreement with a particular item must include agreement with all the other less extreme items and must be accompanied by a rejection of all the more extreme items. Greater methodological strictness is bought at the price of breadth of content' (GS 9.2, p. 348).
- 13 As compared to the 'centred interview', which investigates the interviewee's direct reaction to certain stimuli, 'the clinical interview, which is based on depth psychology, concentrated on deeper strata of consciousness more than on the direct effects of a given experience' (GS 9.2, p. 337).
- 14 See the chapter 'Personality as Revealed through Clinical Interviews', written by Else Frenkel-Brunswik (1908–58), in *The Authoritarian Personality*, pp. 289–486.
- 15 On the concepts of the 'singular sphere' and 'sphere of plurality' see Elisabeth Noelle, *Umfragen in der Massengesellschaft. Einführung in die Methode der Demoskopie*, Hamburg 1963, pp. 11f and p. 12, n. 3: 'For the distinction made here between the spheres of the individual, the personality and the whole, on one hand, and the attribute sphere [i.e. the statistical sphere, variables and indices], on the other, I also

- proposed the concepts “singular sphere” and “plural sphere”. See *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, vol. VI, Winter 1953/4, p. 631.
- 16 See Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. by Anna Bostock, London 1971, p. 29.
- 17 An allusion to Heidegger’s existential ontology; in contradistinction to the categories, the aspects of the existent determined by Being, Heidegger calls the Being-characteristics of human existence *Existenzialien*. (See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford 1980, pp. 79ff.)
- 18 See Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, trans. by Matthew J. O’Connell et al., New York 1974.
- 19 See Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. by W.D. Halls, London 1982.
- 20 See Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, Tübingen 1922. In what follows Adorno is referring to the essay ‘Über einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie’ (1913); *ibid.*, pp. 403–50.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 403–7: ‘I. Sinn einer “verstehenden” Soziologie’.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 408–14: ‘II. Verhältnis zur Psychologie’. The basis for the separation of psychology and sociology in Weber is the concept of ‘action based on means–end rationality’:

After all that has been said, interpretative sociology does not form part of any ‘psychology’. For the most directly ‘intelligible’ form of the meaningful structure of an action is the action directed in a (subjectively) strictly rational way, according to means which are regarded (subjectively) as unambiguously adequate to the attainment of ends which are (subjectively) grasped as clear and unambiguous. And this is most of all the case when these means appear appropriate to the end to the researcher as well. But if such an action is ‘explained’, that certainly does not mean that one wishes to derive it from ‘psychical’ factors; clearly the reverse is the case: it is derived from expectations which are held subjectively with regard to the behaviour of *objects* (subjective means–end rationality), and which may be so held on the basis of valid experience (objective rationality of correctness), and only from those. The more clearly an action is guided by the rationality of correctness, the less it becomes intelligible in terms of psychological considerations. (*ibid.*, p. 408)

On Weber see Lecture 14; on the concept of means–end rationality see Lecture 14 n. 14.

- 23 See Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*. In considering *faits sociaux*, ‘the first and most fundamental rule is to regard sociological facts as things’ (Émile Durkheim, *Die Regeln der soziologischen Methode*, Neuwied/Berlin 1970, p. 115). [English edn: *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. by W.D. Halls, London 1982.]
- 24 On the concept of ‘value freedom’ in Weber see his essays ‘Die Objektivität sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis’ of 1904 and ‘Der Sinn der “Wertfreiheit” der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften’ (1917/18), in Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, pp. 146–214 and 451–502.

- 25 See Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, Glencoe, IL 1960.
- 26 On the concept of the collective consciousness, the *conscience collective*, see *ibid.*, book II, ch. 3. In his paper ‘On the Logic of the Social Sciences’, read at the Tübingen congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Adorno had continued the debate on the concept of value with reference to Weber and Durkheim:

The whole problem of value, which sociology and other disciplines haul about with them like a ballast, is accordingly falsely posed. Scientific awareness of society, which sets itself up as value-free, fails to apprehend reality just as much as one which appeals to more or less preordained and arbitrarily established values. If one admits to the alternative, then one becomes involved in antinomies. Even positivism was not able to extricate itself from them. Durkheim, whose *chosisme* outstripped Weber in positivist sentiments – the latter himself had his *thema probandum* in the sociology of religion – did not recognize value freedom. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, p. 118)

- 27 See Max Scheler, ‘Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens’, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8: *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft, mit Zusätzen*, ed. by Maria Scheler, 2nd rev. edn, Bern/Munich 1960, pp. 15–190.
- 28 This probably refers to Feuerbach’s formulation: ‘To be, not *against* religion, but *above* it. Knowledge is more than faith. However little we know, that definite little is more than the nebulous more which faith has in advance of knowledge’ (trans. from Ludwig Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Wilhelm Bolin and Friedrich Jodl, vol. 10, Stuttgart 1911, p. 326).
- 29 In ‘Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten’, Kant writes: ‘In the sphere of purposes everything has either a *price* or a *dignity*. Whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as an *equivalent*; but whatever is beyond price, and thus admits no equivalent, has a *dignity*’ (Kant, *Werke*, ed. by the Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 4, Berlin 1968, p. 434).
- 30 The psychologist Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916), in his *Philosophie der Werte*, published in 1908, showed affinities with the Neo-Kantian school of South-West Germany, whose representatives, Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936) and Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915), saw it as the task of the ‘cultural sciences’ to establish a timelessly valid ‘realm of values’; see Lecture 17 n. 5.
- 31 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 884.
- 32 See Erwin K. Scheuch, ‘Methodische Probleme gesamtgesellschaftlicher Analysen’ and Ralf Dahrendorf, ‘Herrschaft, Klassenverhältnis und Schichtung’, both in *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft? Im Auftrag der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, ed. by Theodor W. Adorno, Stuttgart 1969.
- 33 See Durkheim, *Die Regeln der soziologischen Methode*, pp. 118f.

- 34 George A. Lundberg (1895–1966) went so far as to demand that sociological research be based on purely physical evidence; see Lundberg, *Social Research. A Study in Methods of Gathering Data*, New York 1942; also see Lundberg, *Foundations of Sociology*, New York 1939.
- 35 See GS 8, pp. 342f.
- 36 On this controversy see Lecture 4 n. 9.

Lecture Ten

- 1 Not 'in the lecture before last', as Adorno mistakenly supposed, but in the last lecture of 11 June. No lecture had been held on 13 June (feast of Corpus Christi); see Lecture 9, pp. 77ff.
- 2 Adorno is referring to Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class. An Economic Study of the Evolution of Institutions*, New York 1989.
- 3 Thorstein Veblen, *Theorie der feinen Leute*, Cologne/Berlin 1958, pp. 163ff.
- 4 Regarding this allusion to Marx's theory see ch. 1.4: 'The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret', in *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1: *The Process of the Production of Capital*, intro. by Ernest Mandel, trans. by Ben Fowkes, London 1976, pp. 163–77.
- 5 On the concept of the 'ideal type' in Weber, see *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich, 2 vols, Los Angeles/London 1978. Weber writes:

For the purposes of a typological analysis it is convenient to treat all irrational, affectually determined elements of behavior as factors of deviation from a conceptually pure type of rational action. [...] Only in this way is it possible to assess the causal significance of irrational factors as accounting for the deviations from this type. The construction of a purely rational course of action in such cases serves the sociologist as a type (ideal type) which has the merit of clear understandability and lack of ambiguity. By comparison with this it is possible to understand the ways in which actual action is influenced by irrational factors of all sorts, such as affects and errors, in that they account for the deviations from the line of conduct which would be expected on the hypothesis that the action were purely rational. (*Economy and Society*, vol. I, p. 6)

On the definition of capitalism in Weber, see *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I*, Tübingen 1947, pp. 4ff.

- 6 In May 1968 the Gaullist government had deployed the Garde nationale against striking students and workers and mobilized military units.
- 7 *Wissenschaftslehre* refers to Wilhelm Dilthey's 'Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte', in Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, ed. by Bernhard Groethuysen, 4th edn, Stuttgart/Göttingen 1959.
- 8 On 10 November 1837 Marx wrote to his father: 'I had read fragments of Hegel's philosophy, and its grotesque, precipitous melody was not

- to my taste' (Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke. Ergänzungsband. Schriften, Manuskripte, Briefe bis 1844. Erster Teil*, Berlin 1973, p. 8).
- 9 On the application to mental formations of the methods of empirical social research originated by Harold D. Lasswell (b. 1902), see the sections 'Empirisch-soziologische Analyse geistiger Produkte (content analysis)' in the article 'Empirische Sozialforschung', GS 9.2, pp. 355f.
 - 10 Regarding Pareto see Lecture 2, including nn. 3 and 8.
 - 11 Lasswell developed content analysis from enemy propaganda in the First World War; see Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, New York 1927.
 - 12 See *Language of Politics. Studies in Quantitative Semantics*, ed. by Harold D. Lasswell and Nathan Leites, New York 1949, ch. 3, pp. 40–52.
 - 13 See Siegfried Kracauer, 'The Challenge of Qualitative Content Analysis', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1952–3, pp. 631–42; Adorno was mistaken in assuming that Lasswell's study had also appeared in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*; only the volume *Language of Politics*, published by Lasswell and Leites, was reviewed by Paul Kecskemeti in the thirteenth issue of the journal in 1949.
 - 14 See Adorno, 'Prolog zum Fernsehen' and 'Fernsehen als Ideologie' in *Eingriffe. Neun kritische Modelle*, Frankfurt/Main 1963, pp. 69–80 and pp. 81–98; now GS 10.2, pp. 507–32.
 - 15 See Adorno, 'Aberglaube aus zweiter Hand', in Max Horkheimer/Theodor W. Adorno, *Sociologica II. Reden und Vorträge*, Frankfurt/Main 1962, pp. 147–62 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 10); now GS 8, pp. 147–76.
 - 16 The starting points of the dispute were the article 'Kunst' by Alphons Silbermann (b. 1909) in the Fischer-Lexikon *Soziologie* (ed. by René König, Frankfurt/Main 1967), and Adorno's essay 'Ideen zur Musiksoziologie', published in *Schweizer Monatshefte* in 1958 (now GS 16, pp. 9–23); the debate was continued, with direct reference to Silbermann, whom Adorno regarded as 'an exponent of the empirical tendency in the sociology of music', in the lectures entitled 'Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie' of the winter semester 1961/2 (see *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. by E.B. Ashton, New York 1976), and in the lectures 'Thesen zur Kunstsoziologie', which Adorno held in November 1965 (see GS 10.1, pp. 367–74). A 'Schlußwort zu einer Kontroverse über Musiksoziologie', following a response from Silbermann, was published posthumously (see GS 10.2, pp. 810–15; on Silbermann's reply to 'Thesen zur Kunstsoziologie' see the editorial foreword, *ibid.*, p. 810).

Lecture Eleven

- 1 Popper's principle of falsification is based on the idea that hypotheses cannot be confirmed inductively by experience but must be proved in face of 'attempts to refute them': 'Theories are not verifiable, but they can be "corroborated"' (Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London 1959, p. 251; also see GS 8, pp. 309–15).

- 2 This is probably the study *Freie Universität und politisches Potential der Studenten. Über die Entwicklung des Berliner Modells und den Anfang der Studentenbewegung in Deutschland*, Neuwied/Berlin 1968.
- 3 See T.W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford in collaboration with Betty Aron, Maria Hertz Levinson and William Morrow, *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York 1950 (*Studies in Prejudice*, vol. 1).
- 4 The supposition formulated in n. 2 that the ‘large [. . .] empirical study’ mentioned by Adorno was that concerning the ‘political potential of the students’ is supported here by Adorno’s reference to the Likert Scale, according to the formal procedure of which the A-Scale used in the survey, the content of which followed the model of the F-Scale in *The Authoritarian Personality*, was developed.

In the Likert Scale (method of summated ratings) the items which correlate best with the overall values [. . .] and have the best selectivity are chosen. The test subjects are asked to express a view on the items, usually graded in five steps. The weighted individual results are summated in the manner of a points rating in sport, and the positions of individuals or groups on the scale are then determined from the points total achieved. (GS 9.2, p. 348)

- 5 See Lecture 9 n. 12.
- 6 In 1921–32 Gottfried Salomon-Delatour (1896–1964) taught as a *Privatdozent* and an associate professor of sociology at Frankfurt. He emigrated to France in 1933 and moved to the United States in 1941, where he was a professor at the New School for Social Research from 1941 to 1943; in the 1930s this was a rather conservative competitor to the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, which had also moved to New York. He did not return to Frankfurt University until 1958, receiving the status of an emeritus full professor in the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, and a teaching post in the Faculty of Philosophy; he taught sociology at the Institut für Sozialforschung until his death.
- 7 See Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown. A Study in Contemporary American Culture*, New York 1929; same authors, *Middletown in Transition. A Study in Cultural Conflicts*, New York 1937. Both works were among the models for the ‘Darmstädter Gemeindestudien’ (see GS 20.2, p. 618).
- 8 It has not been possible to determine whom Adorno was thinking of here.
- 9 See Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy*, trans. by H. Martineau, New York 1974.
- 10 Adorno had placed this question at the centre of his lecture ‘Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?’ at the 16th Conference of German Sociologists (see GS 8, pp. 354–70).
- 11 See Max Horkheimer/Theodor W. Adorno, *Sociologica II. Reden und Vorträge*, Frankfurt/Main 1962, pp. 223–40; also see Lecture 1, including n. 24.

- 12 Regarding Talcott Parsons's attempt to unify and systematize sociology, see Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, Glencoe, IL 1951, and Parsons's collection of essays, *Essays in Sociological Theory. Pure and Applied*, Glencoe, IL 1954; on Parsons see Lecture 1 n. 18.
- 13 On Herbert Spencer see Lectures 3 and 5 and *Principles of Sociology*, London 1876ff; see esp. §§227–8 and §§448–53: 'Political Integration' and §§454–63: 'Political Differentiation'.
- 14 See Lecture 5, p. 40 and the ref. in n. 3.
- 15 See Gabriel Tarde, *Les Lois de l'imitation. Étude sociologique*, 4th edn, Paris 1904.

Lecture Twelve

- 1 The start of this lecture, printed in square brackets, was taken from the pirated Junius edition, as it has not been preserved on the tape.
- 2 See Franz Borkenau, *Der Übergang vom feudalen zum bürgerlichen Weltbild. Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie der Manufakturperiode*, Paris 1934 (*Schriften des Instituts für Sozialforschung*, ed. by Max Horkheimer, vol. 4).
- 3 The term *Universum* (universe) used in sociological survey techniques is understood to mean the 'basic totality' represented by the sample, e.g. the population of a country; see GS 9.2, p. 342. On the 'sphere of plurality' mentioned in what follows see Lecture 9 n. 15.
- 4 The American sociologist and psychologist Stanley Schachter wrote primarily about questions of group and mass sociology.
- 5 Adorno was referring to Popper's demand 'that it should be one of the tasks of scientific criticism to point out confusions of value and to separate purely scientific value problems of truth, relevance, simplicity, and so forth, from extra-scientific problems' (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, pp. 97–8).
- 6 See J.L. Moreno, *Who Shall Survive?* Washington, DC 1934.
- 7 See Theodor W. Adorno, J. Décamps, L. Herberger et al., 'Empirische Sozialforschung', in *Handwörterbuch der Sozialwissenschaften* (also a re-edition of the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*), 6th edn, Stuttgart 1954, pp. 419–32; now GS 9.2, pp. 327–59. On Moreno's sociometry see GS 9.2, pp. 354f.
- 8 Adorno was probably thinking of *Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* published by the Faculty of Political Science at Columbia University, which from 1955 were called *Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences* and published by Columbia University Press, New York; it has not been determined which *issue* Adorno was thinking of here.
- 9 In taking over this dictum of René König's, Erwin Scheuch was following the latter's strict distinction between sociology as a single empirical science and social philosophy (See *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft? Verhandlungen des 16. Deutschen Soziologentages. Im Auftrag der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, ed. by Theodor W. Adorno,

Stuttgart 1959, pp. 184ff). In his introduction to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* Adorno had more to say about this positivist ‘puritanism of knowledge’:

At the Frankfurt Congress of 1968, Erwin Scheuch, in particular, advocated a sociology ‘which seeks to be nothing more than sociology’. At times, scientific modes of behaviour recall the neurotic fear of bodily contact. Purity becomes overvalued. If one were to strip sociology of everything which, for instance, does not strictly correspond to Weber’s definition in the opening pages of *Economy and Society* [*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*], then there would be nothing left. Without all the economic, historical, psychological and anthropological moments it would shuffle aimlessly around every social phenomenon. Its *raison d’être* is not that of an area of study, or an academic ‘subject’, but rather the constitutive – and therefore neglected – context of those areas of study of an older type. It is a piece of intellectual compensation for the division of labour, and should not, in turn, be unconditionally fixed in accordance with the division of labour. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, p. 55 n.)

- 10 See Johann Gottlieb Fichte, ‘Die Bestimmung des Menschen’, in *Fichtes Werke*, ed. by Immanuel Hermann Fichte, vol. 2: *Zur theoretischen Philosophie II*, Berlin 1971 [photo reprint], pp. 165–319; F.W.J. Schelling, ‘Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums’, in *Schellings Werke. Nach der Originalausgabe in neuer Anordnung herausgegeben von Manfred Schröter*, vol. III: *Schriften zur Identitätsphilosophie 1801–06*, Munich 1927, pp. 229–374. Also see Fichte, ‘Einige Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten’, in *Fichtes Werke*, vol. 6: *Zur Politik und Moral*, Berlin 1971, pp. 289–346.
- 11 Adorno was thinking primarily of Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler* (1890), as is suggested by a passage in his essay ‘Kultur und Verwaltung’ where he writes in connection with Max Weber’s opposition between the ‘specialist’ and the ‘civilized human being’ (*Fachmenschentum* and *Kulturmenschentum*): ‘Weber opposes “specialism” [...] as has been usual in late liberal society since Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler*’ (GS 8, p. 127).
- 12 See Lecture 8 n. 7.
- 13 See G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 5: *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, Frankfurt/Main 1969, pp. 149–73.
- 14 Claude Lévi-Strauss, b. 1908 in Brussels, taught sociology in São Paulo/Brazil and New York, and, from 1950, comparative religion in Paris. After his seminal work *Anthropologie structurale* was published in 1958, he was appointed to the Chair of Social Anthropology at the Collège de France in 1959.
- 15 Jacques Lacan (1901–81), who taught at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, is regarded as the founder of a structural psycholinguistics in which insights from the philological structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) and from the ‘Prague School’ of phonology are combined with Freudian psychoanalysis.

- 16 The Slavist and philologist Nikolai Trubetskoy (1890–1938) was a member of the ‘Prague School’ of linguistics and a co-founder of phonology.
- 17 On Parsons and Merton see Lecture 1 n. 18 and Lecture 3 n. 7.
- 18 Hegel termed this *attitude* the ‘tabulating mind’, which takes its pleasure in definitions:

Instead of entering into the immanent content of the thing, it is forever surveying the whole and standing above the particular existence of which it is speaking, i.e. it does not see it at all. Scientific cognition, on the contrary, demands surrender to the life of the object, or, what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing its inner necessity. (*The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller, Oxford 1977, p. 32)

- 19 Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich, 2 vols, Los Angeles/London 1978, vol. 1, p. 1.
- 20 See Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur*, Bonn 1956, esp. part I: ‘Institutionen’, pp. 7–137; also see Helmut Schelsky, *Ortsbestimmung der deutschen Soziologie*, Düsseldorf/Cologne 1959, esp. p. 91.
- 21 On the methodological controversy between Weber and Durkheim see Lecture 9.

Lecture Thirteen

- 1 Which statements by Scheuch Adorno was referring to has not been determined; on the ‘professional prospects for sociologists’ see Lecture 1 and the notes.
- 2 See Lecture 12 n. 18.
- 3 Taking up a formulation of F.T. Vischer, Max Weber wrote polemically about ‘*Stoffhuber und Sinnhuber*’ (gluttons for facts and meanings respectively) in the field of sociology: ‘The fact-craving maw of the former is stopped only by documents, statistical tomes and inquiries, and is insensitive to the subtleties of modern thought. The gourmandise of the latter spoils its own taste for facts with ever-new distillations of thought’ (Max Weber, ‘Die “Objektivität” sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis’, in Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, Tübingen 1922, p. 214). In his copy of Weber’s book Adorno annotated the phrase about the ‘gourmandise of the latter’ with ‘horribly plain fare’.
- 4 On Parsons’s theory of science as a unified ‘continuum’ see Lecture 1, p. 7 and n. 18.
- 5 See Adorno, ‘Die revidierte Psychoanalyse’, in Max Horkheimer/T.W. Adorno, *Sociologica II. Reden und Vorträge*, Frankfurt/Main 1962, pp. 94–112; now GS 8, pp. 20–41. In the references in *Sociologica II* (ibid., pp. 241f) we read: ‘Originally a lecture to the Psychoanalytic Society in San Francisco, April 1946; published in *Psyche*, vol. VI, 1952, no. 1, pp. 1ff.’

- 6 See *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. by E.B. Ashton, New York 1976, pp. 194–218.
- 7 See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. by James Strachey, vol. XV: *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, p. 15.
- 8 See Freud, *Standard Edition*, vol. XXIII: *Moses and Monotheism*, pp. 3–137, especially the passages on the ‘archaic heritage’ (pp. 97ff) and the concept of the ‘collective unconscious’ (p. 132).
- 9 See C.G. Jung, ‘The Concept of the Collective Unconscious’, *St Bartholomew’s Hospital Journal*, vol. XLIV, nos 3 and 4, 1936/7 (now in *Collected Works*, ed. by Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham and Gerhard Adler, trans. by R.F.C. Hull, vol. 9, part I: *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, London/Princeton, NJ 1981).
- 10 On Durkheim’s concept of the ‘collective consciousness’ see Lecture 5 n. 5 and Lecture 9 n. 26.
- 11 See Lecture 2 n. 12.
- 12 See Freud, *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX: *The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, London 1961, pp. 12–66.
- 13 See *ibid.*, ch. III, ‘The Ego and the Super-Ego’ and p. 55; also see Freud, *Standard Edition*, vol. XXI: *Civilisation and its Discontents*, London 1961, pp. 57–145, esp. pp. 123–45.
- 14 See Émile Durkheim, *Suicide. A Study in Sociology*, trans. by J.A. Spaulding and G. Simpson, New York/London 1966.
- 15 In this connection see ‘The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret’, in *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1: *The Process of the Production of Capital*, intro. by Ernest Mandel, trans. by Ben Fowkes, London 1976, pp. 163–77; on the use of the term ‘mystification’ in Marx, see *ibid.*, p. 102.

Lecture Fourteen

- 1 Fritz Bauer (1903–68), who emigrated in 1936 after being dismissed from his post and interned in a concentration camp, returned to Germany in 1949. During the Auschwitz Trial in Frankfurt in 1963–5 he represented the prosecution as Attorney General of the state of Hessen. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno writes: ‘Fritz Bauer has noted that the same types who find a hundred stale arguments for the acquittal of the torturers of Auschwitz favour a re-introduction of the death penalty’ (*Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E.B. Ashton, London 1973, p. 286).
- 2 See Lecture 9 n. 1.
- 3 Ernesto Grassi (b. 1902), at that time Professor of Philosophy at the University of Munich, gave the lecture ‘Vicos Kritik am Beginn des neuzeitlichen Denkens’.
- 4 See Giambattista Vico, *Die Neue Wissenschaft über die gemeinschaftliche Natur der Völker*, ed. and trans. by Erich Auerbach, Munich n.d. [1924] (full translation available in English: *The New Science*, trans. by T.G. Bergin and M.H. Fisch, New York 1961).

- 5 See Max Horkheimer, *Anfänge der bürgerlichen Geschichtsphilosophie*, Stuttgart 1930; now in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2: *Philosophische Frühschriften 1922–32*, Frankfurt/Main 1987, pp. 177–268; on Vico see esp. the last part: ‘Vico und die Mythologie’, pp. 252–68; on the ‘chapter on Machiavelli’ mentioned later, ‘Machiavelli und die psychologische Geschichtsauffassung’, see *ibid.*, pp. 181–204.
- 6 The Italian philosopher of history Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) had drawn attention to Vico’s importance for bourgeois philosophy of history and aesthetics in numerous studies on Vico’s philosophy and especially in his work *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, trans. by R.G. Collingwood, London 1913.
- 7 The statistician Adolf Blind (b. 1906) had been Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Social Science at Frankfurt/Main since 1952.
- 8 On Weber’s theory of science see Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, Tübingen 1922. The reference to the study on the ‘spirit of capitalism’ relates to the treatise *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons, London 1976. By what he calls the ‘sociology of authority’ Adorno means the chapter ‘The Types of Legitimate Domination’ in part 1.
- 9 Adorno is quoting his lecture ‘Zu einem Porträt Thomas Manns’, which he had given at the opening of the Thomas Mann exhibition at Darmstadt on 24 March 1962: ‘Understanding Thomas Mann: the true unfolding of his work will only begin once attention is paid to what is not in the official guide’ (GS 11, p. 336).
- 10 Gustav von Schmoller (1838–1917), who taught in Halle, Strasbourg and Berlin, was the founder of the historical school of national economy. In addition to his scholarly work and editing of the politically influential *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft* (from 1877), von Schmoller was a member of the Prussian Council of State from 1884 and from 1899 represented Berlin University in the Prussian ruling house.
- 11 On the concept of the ‘ideal type’ in Weber see Lecture 10 n. 5 on the construction of the concept of the ‘ideal type’ and its relation to historical material, see here and in the following: Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, pp. 190ff.
- 12 See Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich, 2 vols, Los Angeles/London 1978, vol. I, p. 215.
- 13 See Werner Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus. Historisch-systematische Darstellung des gesamteuropäischen Wirtschaftslebens von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. I: *Einleitung – Die vorkapitalistische Wirtschaft. – Die historischen Grundlagen des modernen Kapitalismus*, 3rd edn, Munich/Leipzig 1919, pp. 14f and 37f.
- 14 See Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. I, p. 26: ‘Action is instrumentally rational (*zweckrational*) when the end, the means, and the secondary results are all rationally taken into account and weighed. This involves rational consideration of alternative means and finally of the relative

- importance of different possible ends.’ (On the concept of ‘means–end’ or ‘instrumental’ rationality also see Lecture 9 n. 22 and Lecture 10 n. 5.) Adorno incorporated his critique of Weber’s concept of ‘means–end rationality’ in ‘Marginalien zu Theorie und Praxis’ (see GS 10.2, pp. 774–6).
- 15 See Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I*, Tübingen 1947, pp. 88ff; also see Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. I, part 2, ch. VI, ‘The Sociology of Religion’, pp. 399ff.
 - 16 On ‘charismatic authority’ in Weber see *Economy and Society*, vol. I, pp. 241ff: ‘Charisma is a phenomenon typical of prophetic movements or of expansive political movements in their early stages. But as soon as domination is well established, and above all as soon as control over large masses of people exists, it gives way to the forces of everyday routine’ (p. 252).
 - 17 See *ibid.*, p. 263.
 - 18 See Max Weber, ‘Über einige Kategorien der verstehenden Soziologie’, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, pp. 403–50; esp. pp. 408–14.
 - 19 The Gestalt psychologist Max Wertheimer (1880–1943) taught at Frankfurt University until 1918 and, after a professorship in Berlin, from 1929; after emigrating to the USA he worked at the New School for Social Research from 1933.
 - 20 See GS 8, pp. 265–70.
 - 21 In his ‘Nachtrag zur Kontroverse zwischen Popper und Adorno’ Habermas had attempted to clarify the antithesis between the ‘analytic and the dialectical theory of science’ by referring to the differently determined relationship of theory to its object and of theory to experience in each. He called the concept of experience used in analytic-empirical procedures ‘restricted’ since these procedures

tolerate only one type of experience, which they define themselves. Only the controlled observation of physical behaviour, performed in an isolated field under reproducible conditions by subjects exchangeable at will, appears to permit intersubjectively valid perceptual judgements. These represent the experiential basis on which theories must be supported if the deductively obtained hypotheses are to be not only logically correct but also empirically sound. Experiential sciences in the strict sense insist that all propositions capable of discussion should be controlled at least indirectly by means of such narrowly channelled experience. (Jürgen Habermas, ‘Analytische Wissenschaftstheorie und Dialektik’, in T.W. Adorno et al., *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie*, 3rd edn, Neuwied/Berlin 1971, p. 159)

Lecture Fifteen

- 1 See Lecture 12 n. 9.
- 2 See Plato, *The State*, bk V, 473Bff.

- 3 See Plato, *The State*, bk IV, 433Aff and 435Aff; on Plato's theory of the state in this context see *Soziologische Exkurse. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen*, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 4), pp. 9ff.
- 4 On the 'claim to power for sociology, first made by Comte and now reproduced more-or-less openly', see GS 8, pp. 316f; also see Lecture 2 n. 5 and Lecture 16.
- 5 Karl Mannheim (1893–1947) took over the expression 'socially free-floating intelligentsia' from Alfred Weber (1868–1958); see Mannheim, 'The Problem of the Intelligentsia', in *Essays on the Sociology of Culture*, London 1956. On Mannheim's concept of ideology, significant in this context, see his *Ideology and Utopia*, London/New York 1936.
- 6 Adorno wrote a critique of Mannheim's 'Problem der Elitenbildung', originally intended for publication in the journal *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, as early as 1937, with the title 'Neue wertfreie Soziologie. Aus Anlaß von Karl Mannheims "Mensch und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Umbaus"' (Leyden 1935). In this early essay, only published posthumously, he writes:

Mannheim regards the 'elites', a concept he took over from Pareto, as an organ of integration. They are supposed to effect the integration of wills (effect on integration of the numerous wills) and are regarded as the agents of social rationality, since 'social knowledge and right of disposal are increasingly concentrated for practical reasons in the heads of a few politicians, economic leaders, administrators and legal specialists' (22). (GS 20.1, p. 20)
- 7 See Oskar Negt, *Strukturbeziehungen zwischen den Gesellschaftslehren Comtes und Hegels*, Frankfurt/Main 1964, pp. 36f (*Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, vol. 14).
- 8 Comte set out this 'law of three stages' in the introduction to *The Positive Sociology*, trans. by H. Martineau, New York 1974.
- 9 See Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, London 1876ff, pp. 5ff.
- 10 Adorno is referring to the Mayo study which he mentioned in the lecture of 14 May 1968; see Lecture 7 n. 5.
- 11 On the 'informal group' see Lecture 7, pp. 56ff and n. 4.
- 12 See Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, §§515–21: 'Military Systems' and §§547–61: 'The Militant Type of Society'.
- 13 See Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class. An Economic Study of the Evolution of Institutions*, New York 1989, ch. 9: 'The Conservation of Archaic Traits', pp. 212–45.
- 14 Elsie, 'the contented cow', was introduced to literature in Adorno's essay 'Individuum und Organisation' (GS 8, p. 453).

Lecture Sixteen

- 1 See Hans Freyer, *Soziologie als Wirklichkeitswissenschaft. Logische Grundlegung des Systems der Soziologie*, Leipzig/Berlin 1930.

- 2 This thesis of Adorno's becomes clearer in his formulation from the Introduction to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*:

Positivism regards sociology as one science among others and, since Comte, has considered that the proven methods of older science, in particular of natural science, can be transferred to sociology. The actual *pseudos* is concealed here. For sociology has a dual character. In it, the subject of all knowledge – society, the bearer of logical generality – is at the same time the object. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, p. 33)

- 3 On Paul Lazarsfeld and Adorno's collaboration with him on the Princeton Radio Research Project in 1938–40 see Lecture 9 n. 6.
- 4 See Paul F. Lazarsfeld, 'Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research', *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, vol. IX, no. 1, 1941, pp. 2ff.
- 5 See René König's 'Einleitung' to the Fischer-Lexikon *Soziologie* edited by him (Frankfurt/Main 1967), in which he writes: 'In this book the *concept of sociology* is understood to be an individual empirical science. [...] From sociology thus understood all philosophically orientated viewpoints are eradicated, in particular *historical* and *social philosophy*' (*ibid.*, p. 8).
- 6 The psychoanalyst Alexander Mitscherlich (1908–82) was appointed to the University of Frankfurt in 1966; from 1959 to 1976 he was Director of the Sigmund Freud-Institut in Frankfurt/Main.
- 7 See Lecture 12 n. 9.
- 8 See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons, London 1976.
- 9 See Charles Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, London 1959.
- 10 The comment by Marx on Comte that Adorno was thinking of here has not been identified; however, Marx's letter to Engels of 7 July 1866 confirms that he was right in characterizing Marx's judgement on Comte as annihilating: 'I'm now studying Comte on the side, since the English and French make so much fuss about the fellow. What fascinates them is the encyclopaedic scope, *la synthèse*. But that's pitiful beside Hegel (although Comte is superior as a mathematician and physicist by profession, i.e. superior in detail; even there Hegel is infinitely great in total). And this damned positivism appeared in 1832!' (Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, ed. by the Institute for Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the SED, vol. 31, Berlin 1965, p. 234).

Lecture Seventeen

- 1 The start of the lecture, enclosed in square brackets, was added from the 'Junius' version as it is not preserved on tape.
- 2 See Jürgen Habermas, 'Analytische Wissenschaftstheorie und Dialektik', in T.W. Adorno et al., *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie*,

- 3rd edn, Neuwied/Berlin 1971, pp. 155–92; on the relationship of ‘theory and history’ see esp. pp. 161–6.
- 3 Adorno is referring to Supplement 5 of the *Philosophische Rundschau* (Siebeck und Mohr, Tübingen), in which Habermas’s treatise *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften* had been published in February 1967.
 - 4 On Veblen’s concept of ‘conspicuous consumption’ see Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class. An Economic Study of the Evolution of Institutions*, New York 1989, ch. 4: ‘Conspicuous Consumption’, pp. 68–101.
 - 5 The distinction between the nomothetic and the idiographic was originated by Wilhelm Windelband and corresponds to the distinction made by Rickert between natural science, which seeks generalizing laws, and cultural science, which investigates the ‘value’ of an individual phenomenon in which a ‘cultural good’ is realized; see Wilhelm Windelband, ‘History and Natural Science’, trans. by James T. Lamiell, *Theory & Psychology*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1998, pp. 5–22; see Lecture 9 n. 30.
 - 6 Marx speaks of a ‘tendency’ when certain factors do not negate the effect of a general law but delay, slow down or weaken its operation. The most famous model, of which Adorno was probably thinking here, is the ‘law of the tendency of the general rate of profit to fall’. ‘Counteracting influences must be at work, checking and cancelling the effect of the general law and giving it simply the character of a tendency’ (Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 3: *The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*, trans. by David Fernbach, Harmondsworth 1981, p. 339).
 - 7 In his Introduction to the *Positivist Dispute* Adorno developed this form of the concept of the social law not from the difference to the laws of natural science but from the dialectical definition of the social relation of the individual to the universal:

The dialectical formulation of social laws as historically concrete laws accords with the emphasis on the individual, an emphasis which, for the sake of its immanent generality it does not sacrifice to comparative generality. The dialectical determinacy of the individual as something simultaneously particular and general alters the social concept of law. It no longer possesses the form ‘if – then’ but rather ‘since – must’. In principle, it is only valid under the precondition of lack of freedom, since, inherent in the individual moments, is already a determinate law-likeness which follows from the specific social structure, and is not merely a product of the scientific synthesis of individual moments. (Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976, pp. 39–40)

- 8 See Jürgen Habermas, Ludwig von Friedeburg, Christoph Oehler and Friedrich Weltz, *Student und Politik. Eine Untersuchung zum politischen Bewußtsein Frankfurter Studenten*, Neuwied 1961, pp. 11–55.
- 9 See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge 1960.
- 10 See Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, London 1949.
- 11 Goethe, *Faust II*, v. 11601.

- 12 On the concept of 'ego weakness' see Hermann Nunberg, 'Ichstärke und Ichschwäche', *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, vol. 24, 1939, pp. 49–61.
- 13 GS 3, p. 263.
- 14 Marx's so-called 'Theses on Feuerbach' were written as notes in 1845, with the heading '1. ad Feuerbach'; see Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, ed. by the Institute for Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the SED, vol. 3, 4th edn, Berlin 1969, pp. 5–7.
- 15 See Lecture 9, inc. n. 22.
- 16 See Lecture 5, inc. n. 3.
- 17 Adorno held the seminar series 'Problems of the Authoritarian Personality' in the winter semester 1967/8.
- 18 See Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford in collaboration with Betty Aron, Maria Hertz Levinson and William Morrow, *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York 1950 (*Studies in Prejudice*, vol. 1), pp. 461ff.
- 19 See Walter Benjamin, 'Brief an einen unbekanntem Adressaten', *alternative*, vol. 10, Oct./Dec. 1967, no. 56/7, p. 203. Benjamin's letter of 12 June 1938 was written to Norbert Elias. On the polemic conducted by the journal *alternative* against Adorno as the editor and interpreter of Walter Benjamin see Adorno's 'Interimsbescheid' and the editorial notes in T.W. Adorno, *Über Walter Benjamin. Aufsätze, Artikel, Briefe. Revidierte und erweiterte Ausgabe*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt/Main 1990, pp. 91–6.
- 20 In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno writes:

A fact supporting the objectivistic resuscitation of ontology would indeed be the least compatible with its idea: the fact that to a great extent the subject came to be an ideology, a screen for society's objective functional context and a palliative for the subject's suffering under society. In this sense – and not just today – the not-I has moved drastically ahead of the I. (*Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E.B. Ashton, London 1973, pp. 66–7)

- 21 This formulation, used frequently by Max Horkheimer (see Adorno's reference in GS 10.2, pp. 722f), is probably taken from Erich Fromm (1900–80), who was working on a sketch for an analytical social psychology in the early 1930s. He primarily investigated the 'libidinal energies of human beings, which form the cement without which society would not hold together, and which contribute to the production of the great social ideologies in all cultural spheres' (Erich Fromm, 'Über Methode und Aufgabe einer analytischen Sozialpsychologie', *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, vol. 1, 1932, no. 1/2, p. 50).
- 22 Adorno is referring to the studies 'Zur Rezeption rechtsextremer Propaganda' which were begun at that time at the Institut für Sozialforschung, under the impact of the electoral successes of the NPD. The research was completed in 1972 and published in Ursula Jaerisch, *Sind Arbeiter autoritär? Zur Methodenkritik politischer Psychologie*, Frankfurt/Cologne 1975.

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- 23 Adorno reported this event in a letter to Jacob Taubes of 11 July 1968, written after the lecture: 'I myself had the most horrifying experience in my last lecture, when I protested against the extremely brutal way in which the Germanist Stern, with whom, heaven knows, I do not agree, was prevented from giving his lecture by being shouted down.'
- 24 In 1962 Martin Stern (b. 1930 in Zurich), a lecturer in the German Department at Frankfurt University since 1967, had polemicized against Adorno's essays 'Jene zwanziger Jahre' and 'Voraussetzungen. Aus Anlaß einer Lesung von Hans G. Helms' in *Schweizer Monatshefte* (vol. 41, no. 12, March 1962, pp. 1326ff). In early 1966 the two men met on the occasion of a lecture by Stern, as a result of which, in a letter of 18 January 1966, Stern apologized for his earlier attacks.
- 25 The Swiss literary historian Emil Staiger (b. 1908), the leading representative of 'immanent interpretation' and a follower of Heidegger, taught at the University of Zürich from 1943.
- 26 See Jürgen Habermas, 'Die Scheinrevolution und ihre Kinder', in *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform*, Frankfurt/Main 1969; also see Lecture 9 n. 1.
- 27 In a further letter written by Adorno to Helmut Becker after completing the lecture series on 11 July, he writes as follows, looking back on the semester: 'Next week the vacation at last. I got through the semester better than I could have expected. All the annoyance I have had here belongs to the realm of what I call spiritless misery.'

EDITOR'S AFTERWORD

Adorno's *Introduction to Sociology* is the last lecture series he gave and the only one for which a complete tape recording exists. It was not least this which influenced the decision of the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv to begin the fourth section of his *Nachgelassene Schriften*, containing fifteen transcriptions of lecture series in all, with this edition, and to prefer it to other, more important ones. Although the editorial value of tape recordings should not be overestimated, their survival in this case did make it possible to document Adorno's style of delivery, at the beginning of a comprehensive edition of his lectures, with an authenticity regarding detail which is not always the case with existing transcriptions, which cannot be compared to the tape. From the winter semester 1957/8, when Adorno was lecturing on *Epistemology*, he had transcripts of his lectures made from tape recordings, so that he could make use of parts of them in later works. Adorno himself never thought of publishing these transcripts, since the difference between the written and the spoken word seemed to him too great. But it is not only the fact of the survival of the tape in the archive which induced the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv to begin the publication of the lectures with the *Introduction to Sociology*. As a résumé of his decades of work in sociology the present lecture series also provides an introduction to the critical theory of society which Adorno represented in the 1950s and 1960s, and to the development of which he had made a decisive contribution. The lectures on sociology, with Adorno's critique of positivism at their centre, demonstrate in exemplary fashion what critical theory once stood for: the demand, raised programmatically by Max Horkheimer in the early 1930s for the work at the Institut für Sozialforschung, for a 'dialectical interpenetration of the development of philosophical theory and the praxis of individual disciplines'. Adorno adhered to this in all his works. It provides their 'internal bond', their unbroken living impulse.

Adorno's dicta that the tape recording was the 'fingerprint of the living mind', and that the attempt at 'pinning down' the 'ephemeral word' was a symptom of the 'administered world' (see GS 20.1, p. 360), in conjunction with the obligation to respect the words which have come down to us, and not to falsify the extempore lecture in its often improvised form, presented not inconsiderable editorial problems. The somewhat vague notion evoked by talk of the 'extempore' lecture can be made more concrete in Adorno's case by reference to the handwritten notes he used as prompts. They take up no more than nine sides of a ruled A4 pad, four pages being written on both sides. Any attempt to diminish the distance between the spoken and written word characterized by Adorno leads to a casuistic dilemma: it obliterates the former without being able to attain the latter. The opportunity to hear the linguistic flow of his delivery on tape, which only exists in the case of these lectures – a flow on which the syntactic articulation of some sentences of the transcription fully depended – was to be exploited, even at the risk that unusual sentence structures would present linguistic difficulties which would not help the reader's understanding to the degree expected of a written text. The procedure adopted in detail was in keeping with these general considerations. The basis of the edition was a newly made official version of the tape transcripts in which all introductory and marginal comments relating to university politics, internal institutional matters and technical questions were included. The amendments made try to preserve the character of extempore speaking, even if one would proceed differently in written German. That is to say that unusual word placements and sentence constructions, as well as repetitions which 'pick up the thread' or give special emphasis, are retained. The articulation of the spoken lecture required punctuation to be used not only for its grammatical function but for rhetorical purposes: the frequent use of dashes, colons and commas by which insertions, possible objections, incidental comments, direct involvement of the audience or reflections on his own lecture were to be incorporated in the main sentence. Formal corrections to anacolutha arising from the situation, or clear grammatical errors which distorted the meaning, and the occasional deletion of repetitions which added nothing to the content but obstructed understanding of an already unmanageable sentence, have been made tacitly. Particles of speech have been deleted in some cases where they were accumulated as mere filling, without modifying the meaning. Other additions by the Editor are placed in square brackets where single words have been inserted in short gaps produced by technical factors connected with the recording or by unclear passages and could be conjectured without difficulty. In one case a question mark after a word in square brackets indicates an uncertain transcription resulting from poor recording quality; a slight loss of text that could not be replaced easily is shown by [. . .]. Also in square brackets are reactions from the auditorium, e.g. [*Applause*] or [*Laughter*], which are reproduced not for atmospheric reasons but because in each case they interrupt the flow of speech, provoke counter-reactions from the speaker, or cause repetitions, and thus influence the form of the lecture. Adorno's additions to quotations are in angled brackets. Linguistic peculiarities of Adorno's which recur persistently have been

retained, even when they deviate from official usage. Quotations are in single quotation marks in the text, as are indirect or partial quotations, terms of other authors cited and unusual word forms derived from oral speech.

The notes are intended as factual explanations of names, works and events mentioned, and attempt, in a few cases in which a complex matter is only touched on or in which Adorno's meaning is not clearly expressed, to clarify the lecturer's intention by referring to corresponding passages in his writings. It has not always been possible to trace allusions and cursory mentions. It would have pleased Adorno to see the compulsive character of editorial logic and uniformity flouted in this way – although that does not make a virtue of editorial necessity. The 'concept headings' in the Contents listing are intended merely to help the reader find his or her way, and not to impart to the lectures a structure, still less a systematic one, which they do not have.

The Editor would like to thank Ludwig von Friedeburg, Elisabeth Matthias and Elfriede Olbrich of the Frankfurter Institut für Sozialforschung, who have supported the editing process with much information and great willingness to help.

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TRANSLATOR'S AFTERWORD

The Editor's Afterword to the German edition has been translated in full, with minor modifications, since it is relevant to the original German text and to the general problem of transcribing partly improvised material. However, the situation for a translator of an extempore text is different from that of the editor in the original language. The latter is concerned with providing the closest possible facsimile of the spoken original. It would clearly be out of place to replace Adorno's formulations with other, possibly clearer ones in the same language, since this would entail an unnecessary element of interpretation and possible falsification. Faced with the choice between a faithful text and one which is possibly more elegant but certainly less authentic, the editor rightly chooses the former. The translator, however, is not faced by this dilemma. He or she has to replace the words of the original in any case, and an element of interpreting and re-arranging is inherent in his or her job. In the case of an improvised text such as this, the deviation from the original may be somewhat greater, but the same principle applies: some structures which work well in one language cannot be transferred directly into another. In the case of German, and particularly Adorno's German in these lectures, the possibility of telescoping together a series of statements in a single sentence, to which the syntax of German lends itself far better than that of English, has given rise to cumulative sentence structures which would be unintelligible if reproduced directly in English. It would have been quite artificial to try to carry over the repetitiveness and occasional incoherence of the original in the translation, and would merely have placed an unnecessary screen between the reader and the text. Moreover, once this screen is removed, Adorno's text turns out to have a rigour and clarity which belies his own concept of the necessary distinction between the written and spoken word; these lectures are far more coherent in their thought than many written texts this translator

has encountered. Where the spoken text does differ from the written, and to the benefit of the former, is in the spontaneity which informs Adorno's presentation of his material here. This, of course, is something which the translation should certainly try to capture, as has been done in this case. It shows us a somewhat different Adorno to the one who composed the faultlessly articulated and almost forbiddingly perfect prose of the works published in his lifetime. The prose here is certainly less dense than that of the works composed in writing; but for that reason it is also more accessible. It might be seen, perhaps, as a kind of compression chamber, and thus as an ideal introduction to Adorno's work: the reader who has passed through it will be acclimatized to the greater density of thought and language he or she will encounter in reading Adorno's classic texts.

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